













# Encounter

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Edited by MELVIN J. LASKY and NIGEL DENNIS

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Goronwy Rees, Maurice Cranston, Anthony Hartley, John Mander, John Weightman.

ASSISTANT EDITOR: Margot Walmsley. EDITORIAL ASSISTANT: Bryan Healing.

GENERAL MANAGER: Anthony Robinson. ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER: John Hall.

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**METHUEN**

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## The Cats of St. Nicholas

*But deep inside me sings  
the Fury's lyreless threnody:  
my heart, self-taught, has lost  
the precious confidence of hope . . .*

AESCHYLUS, *Agamemnon*, 990 ff.

"That's the Cape of Cats ahead," the captain said to me,  
pointing out a low stretch of shore through the fog,  
the beach deserted; it was Christmas day—  
". . . and in the distance towards the West the wave gave birth to  
Aphrodite;  
they call the place the Greek's Rock.  
Left ten degrees rudder!"  
She had Salome's eyes, the cat I lost a year ago;  
and old Ramazan—how he would look death square in the eyes,  
whole days long in the snow of the East,  
under the frozen sun,  
days long square in the eyes: the young hearth god.  
Don't stop, traveller.  
"Left ten degrees rudder," mumbled the helmsman.

. . . maybe my friend was close by,  
now between ships,  
shut up in a small house with pictures,  
searching for windows behind the frames.  
The ship's bell struck  
like a coin from some city that disappeared  
coming to revive in the mind, as it falls,  
alms from another time.

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\* See, among other travellers between 1483 and 1750, Estienne de Lusignan, *Description de toute l'isle de Cypre* (Paris, 1580; photo-offset ed.: Les éditions L'oiseau, Ammochostos, 1968):

"So as not to forget how these poisonous reptiles were exterminated from the above-mentioned Promontory, one must note the following: . . . the first Duke of Cyprus had a Monastery built for monks of the order of St. Basil in honour of St. Nicholas, and he gave this whole Promontory to the Monastery on condition that the monks would be bound to feed at least one hundred cats every day, for which they would provide some daily meat in the morning and the evening, at the sound of a small bell, so that the cats would not always feed on venom alone and for the rest of the day and the night would hunt down these serpents. Even in our time this Monastery fed more than forty cats. And thence comes its name, even to this day: the Promontory of the Cats." *Library*. —G.S.

"It's strange," the captain said,  
"That bell—given what day it is—  
reminded me of that other bell, the one the monastery used.  
A monk told me the story:  
a half-mad monk, a kind of dreamer.

It was the time of the great drought,  
forty years without rain,  
the whole island devastated,  
people died and snakes were born.  
This cape had millions of snakes  
fat as a man's leg  
and full of poison.  
In those days the monastery of St. Nicholas  
was held by the monks of St. Basil,  
and they couldn't work their fields  
and they couldn't put their flocks to pasture;  
they were saved in the end by the cats they raised.

Every day at dawn a bell would strike  
and the crew of cats would move out to battle.  
They'd fight the day long, until  
the bell would sound the evening feed.  
Supper done, the bell would sound again  
and out they'd go to fight the night's war.  
They say it was a wonderful thing to see them:  
some lame, some twisted, others missing  
a nose, an ear, their hides in shreds.  
So to the sound of four bells a day  
months went by, years, season after season.  
Wildly obstinate, always wounded,  
they annihilated the snakes; but in the end they disappeared:  
they just couldn't take in that much poison.  
Like a ship gone down  
they didn't leave a thing above the surface:  
no miaow, no bell even.  
Steady as you go!

What could they do, the poor devils,  
fighting like that day and night, drinking in  
the poisonous blood of those reptiles?  
Centuries of poison; generations of poison."  
"Steady as you go," echoed the indifferent helmsman.

Wednesday, 5 February 1969

*translated by Edmund Keeley*

John Weightman

# The Concept of the *AVANT-GARDE*

I HAVE CHOSEN to try to explore the phenomenon of the *avant-garde* for two reasons. In the first place, it has been my lot to find myself involved in the discussion and criticism of contemporary French literature during the development and temporary predominance of an *avant-garde* with which I have been unable fully to sympathise. I am referring to the literary movement known as the *Nouveau Roman*, or New Novel, that has now been superseded to some extent by the *Nouveau Nouveau Roman*, with which, alas, I also have some difficulty. It is a disturbing experience for a critic or a teacher to have to adopt a rather negative attitude towards the material he is supposed to be expounding. Given the general atmosphere, he is bound to ask himself if culture is not marching on into the future and leaving him behind among the fossils of the past, and even though my reservations about this particular *avant-garde* are shared by a number of people whose opinions I respect, I confess to having experienced feelings of guilt and inadequacy, which have led me to reflect on the general nature of *avant-garde* attitudes.

But there is also a much broader and more important reason. For a century-and-a-half, at least, the history of literature, especially in France, has been marked by the emergence of new literary movements—which we may, or may not, wish to call *avant-gardes*—each normally accompanied by a theory of literature. Their succession has gradually led not simply to the belief that literature is subject to change,

which is a self-evident fact, but to the rather different conviction that the principles according to which works of literature are composed must undergo continuous alteration if literature is not to stagnate. For instance, a prominent member of the New Novel Group, M. Michel Butor, argues that a writer who works according to the conventions of the preceding generation or generations instead of inventing new ones, is actually poisoning the mind of the public. In other words, the validity or virtue of literature is made to depend on the repeated invention of something new in form or content, this new element being meant to be particularly appropriate to the stage that culture has reached.

It is only a step from this attitude to the view that literature is subject to obsolescence, and that works of art, even good ones, are fully appropriate only to the period at which they are produced. This is part of the thesis that M. Jean-Paul Sartre developed so brilliantly in his essay *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* (1948) and that he illustrated by an unusual comparison. He said that books are like bananas; their flavour can be properly appreciated only if they are consumed on the spot. It follows that the works of the past must be rather like old bananas; they must have died, partly or completely, with the past, *i.e.*, must have become too commonplace or too incomprehensible to retain much interest for us. This view may seem paradoxical in an age when knowledge of certain aspects at least of the past seems to be more detailed than ever before. Nevertheless, it has been expressed very forcibly by certain famous exponents of *avant-garde* attitudes. Marcel Duchamp drew a moustache on a copy of the Mona Lisa to indicate an irre-

*This is the text of Professor Weightman's inaugural lecture given recently at Westfield College in the University of London.*



verent approach to traditionally admired works. In a book published only a few months ago, the painter, Jean Dubuffet, poured scorn on the idea that any present-day reader or theatre-goer might sincerely enjoy the tragedies of Racine. Even more explicit is a remark by Antonin Artaud, a greatly revered figure at the moment in certain literary and theatrical circles. He declares in his major work *Le théâtre et son double*:

*Les chefs d'œuvre du passé sont bons pour le passé; ils ne sont pas bons pour nous.*

(The masterpieces of the past are good for the past, or appropriate to the past, they are no good for us.)

IF THIS DOCTRINE were taken literally, museums, libraries, and most theatres and concert-halls could be closed down, the discussion of literature in the universities would come to an end, and there would be no occasions such as this one. However, I don't think we are meant to consider it as being wholly serious. After all, Artaud himself was inspired by Elizabethan drama and traditional Balinese dancing, both of which are relics of the past. It is, presumably, partly a reaction against undue reverence for the past and an extreme and vivid way of making the point that the past should be subordinated to the present and the future. But the fierce insistence on the present and the future to the detriment of the past has by now, I think, led to a curious situation, not only in literature and art but in other fields too. In France, more perhaps than elsewhere, what we might call the *avant-garde* approach is evident in literary criticism, philosophy, politics, and indeed in all branches of intellectual and artistic activity. Many people now have a strong tendency to accept a given attitude and to find arguments in its favour precisely because of its supposedly up-to-date character. In this way, the fashion of the moment becomes, as it were, a temporary absolute.

But the tendency can go a stage further still. It may lead to the conviction that the most up-to-date phenomenon is the one that has not yet been discovered, but is *just about to be*. This means that the existing state of affairs is always, by definition, expendable and inferior to the future—provided, of course, that the future is being brought about by people who have a suitable contempt for the past. This is the intellectual equivalent of the declaration made by Artaud on the aesthetic level. It is a way of saying not only that we have no need

of the masterpieces of the past but also that we can, and should, dispense with the realities and ideas of the past.

### *The Fluidity of Thought*

IN CASE this sounds like an exaggeration, let me take a recent example from French university life. Among the many people who have given accounts of the student revolt of last May is a professor of the University of Nanterre, who writes under the pen-name of Epistémon, and who is, I am told, a former classical scholar, now a teacher of psychology. In his little book, *Ces idées qui ont ébranlé la France* (1968), he tells us that the events of May introduced him to what he calls *le non-savoir*, non-knowledge. (This, presumably, is why he calls himself ironically Epistémon, "the knowing one" or "the learned one.") He says that through being challenged by his students, apparently for the first time, he suddenly realised that he wasn't absolutely sure of anything, that in effect he knew nothing, had no knowledge to impart, and could only step down humbly from his pedestal, as he puts it, and discuss his ignorance with his pupils. This he presents as an exciting and indeed lyrical experience, a sort of revelation or conversion. As I read the passage, I was reminded of the old fable about the Emperor in the invisible robe; it was as if the Emperor himself had discovered he had no clothes on and was delighted with his nakedness. Admittedly, in the context, "non-knowledge" is to some extent a play on words. What Epistémon seems to favour is the rejection of all existing knowledge, in the conviction that something new and better will emerge spontaneously from the resulting vacuum. It is as if he were counting on the approaching moment to provide him with superior truth, as if the mere fact of moving forward nakedly in time were bound to constitute progress. However, he doesn't explain on what basis he will judge the new truth when it occurs; he just tends to assume that because it will be new, it will be better. And he seems to be so caught up in the excitement of the moment that the possibility of the new truth being a re-issue of an old error never crosses his mind.

Actually, I think that Epistémon's attitude is a mixture, possibly a muddle, of at least three different things. First, it is undeniable that, in the arts subjects as opposed to the sciences,

knowledge is relative, and that there are moments when any arts specialist may feel that he knows nothing. This is for the obvious reason that, in an arts discipline—and I count Epistémon's psychology as an arts discipline and not yet a fully established science—that part of the subject which can be fully and finally known is less important than the other, speculative part, which is always doubtful. If we are studying French, for instance, we can learn the genders of the nouns, and the rules of grammar, and no theory about the uncertainty of knowledge will excuse us if we get them wrong, just as, in dealing with literature, we mustn't commit factual mistakes, such as confusing the Maron de Montesquieu with the Comte de Montesquiou, or mis-reading a text. There are enough ascertainable details of this kind to keep us endlessly busy, so that no one who is trying to learn French can ever complain of a vacuum of non-knowledge. But, of course, the essential part of the subject, the study of French culture, consists of theories about the facts, and here we enter a field where everything is provisional. We are dealing with a shifting mass of hypotheses, and it is a commonplace that there is no final consensus of opinion about any of them. In other words, the arts subjects are concerned ultimately not with verifiable facts but with moral and aesthetic judgments which are never completely settled, since they are not yet definable in scientific terms, and we who make these judgments are organic creatures living in time. But if Epistémon didn't know this already, I cannot imagine how he functioned as a university teacher before the events of May, since it is the business of such a teacher always to be distinguishing between the known and the unknown, and to be assessing degrees of plausibility of the probable.

Secondly, he may have been half-remembering the well-known procedure of the *tabula rasa*, which consists of making a clean sweep of one's opinions until one can test them again according to a new set of criteria. There are two distinguished exponents of this procedure in French history—the philosopher Descartes and the poet and thinker Paul Valéry. However, the procedure is not compatible with non-knowledge, since its aim is, precisely, to reconstruct all knowledge, past or present, on a sounder basis. It is very close to the technique of Socrates, the first university teacher, who went on failing to understand and proclaiming his ignorance until, by a process of elimination

and development, he hit upon a provisionally satisfactory formulation, or to the sceptical attitude expressed by Montaigne's "*Que sais-je?*", which conveys a sense of the fluidity of thought. Socrates, Montaigne, Descartes and Valéry may have been doubtful about the stability of knowledge, but they spent all their time trying to arrive at knowledge.

Since Epistémon makes play with the term "non-knowledge," I think that, in his case, there is a third element which is more important, and this is what I would call the *avant-garde* itch to jettison the past because it is the past and to hurry on the future, even though the future may be so vague as to be quite formless. This, one might think, is carrying imprudence to the point of irrationality. It can be seen as a kind of intellectual catastrophism, an urge to throw the baby out with the bath-water. But for a long time now, *avant-garde* attitudes have been marked by an extremism which is deliberately irrational. This is indicated, amongst other things, by the contemporary American expression "way-out," which seems to mean both belonging to the extreme *avant-garde* and remote from the norms of reason.

IF I HAD TIME,<sup>1</sup> I could quote an indefinite number of other examples to show how the

<sup>1</sup> Since I wrote the above comment on Epistémon, the *Guardian*, as it happens, has published an article by Roger Poole ("Universities of the Future," 31 Jan. 1969) which explains the English "students' revolt" in terms very similar to those of Epistémon. Many sentences are a direct echo of *avant-garde* attitudes I have just referred to, e.g.:

"'Facts' are much-despised, lower-order munitions of the universities, as out of date as the rifles of the Crimean War. These arsenals of facts should be kept discreetly in the background and the University should not 'impose' these facts upon the students if they don't want to be told about them."

"The University is there to study the future. What students really want are facts about the future, and teachers are judged harshly if they cannot supply them."

"Who needs the Odes of Horace, of Marvell, of Keats? The absolute effective model of beat poetry or guitar poetry has made their pretended virtues only too relative... the teacher of poetry should himself be first and foremost a poet... he does not exist as a teacher, for there is, strictly speaking, nothing to learn."

"The text is there to be *felt*, to be *experienced in the here and now*. Historical comment upon it is valueless."

It is not clear to me how far Mr. Poole himself accepts the views he summarises. I should say that

obsession with movement in time is often linked with irrationalism and extremism—in the French New Novel, in poetry, in the *avant-garde* theatre, in the fine arts and architecture, in the cinema (especially the so-called Underground cinema), and even in what is called the new theology. However, I would like to take the precaution of stating at this point that although I am critical of some *avant-garde* attitudes, I am not proposing to launch a general offensive against the *avant-garde*. It so happens that I have a great admiration for certain parts of it, and I count myself a progressive, not a conservative. Nor am I going to make another last-ditch plea for rationalism at all costs. Although at this moment I am trying to think rationally, I would not commit myself to a simple preference for reason over all forms of the non-rational.

### Living in Time

WHAT I HAVE SAID so far is really by way of introduction to my theme: how has it come about that there is now such an obsession with change, such an urge to hurry it on, often in extreme and irrational ways, such a desire, as it were, to soup up time's winged chariot? After all, there have been cultures based on the opposite assumption, that is on the belief that change should be resisted as far as possible and that civilisation consisted precisely in protecting certain values and monuments

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they show the usual confusion between genuine criticism of the University as the home of dry-as-dust learning and an impossible romanticism about starting the world anew with no reference to the past. No doubt the University itself is very much to blame for being as dry-as-dust, through a mistaken belief in "academic objectivity" about matters on which one can only have opinions. The University exists to discuss life, and there is no reason why it should be dull, if life is not dull. But to despise all "facts" is stupid. I have come across "students" who would have liked to know French without actually learning it and to be acquainted with the contents of books without ever opening them. There is not much to be done for these abstentionists until knowledge can be injected with a syringe. Similarly, the assertion that "historical comment is valueless" is nonsensical. What we did and thought yesterday is already a subject for historical speculation, and every use of language is bound, in a sense, to be reflexive and historical. My thesis is that the *avant-garde* belief that the past can, and should be, rejected *en bloc* is itself a tradition by now, and a very questionable one.

against erosion by time. Indeed, Western civilisation itself was like this over a considerable period of its history, and a majority of people may think that it still should be. But the opposite attitude now appears to be widespread in those circles where art and ideas are being created, that is in the various *avant-gardes*. Therefore, if we make an effort to understand them, we inevitably raise the whole tangled problem of our relationship to time. Obviously I am not going to solve it in a few pages. I can only comment tentatively on certain aspects of it in the light of my reading of French literature.

The French word, *l'avant-garde*, is of course a military term, a very old one which is found in medieval French. No one seems to know when exactly it was first used as a metaphor, but I have been unable to find any examples before the 19th century. According to an Italian scholar, the late Renato Poggioli, whose book, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde* (1968) is an extremely valuable and exhaustive account of various *avant-garde* manifestations and doctrines, the expression was first used metaphorically from 'bout 1845 by French political movements in referring to themselves, but it was only during the very last years of the 19th century that the metaphor was transferred from politics to literary and artistic activities, to which it has since been mainly attached. Poggioli therefore argues that the *avant-garde* in the modern sense is quite recent, and that the first intimations of it go back only as far as the Romantic movement.

I agree that the *avant-garde* mentality, in its exacerbated form, belongs to the last 75 years or so. But if we look at the matter in the context of French literary history, I think it is possible to suggest that what we are dealing with is not an absolutely new and separate phenomenon; it is rather the latest effect of a long and extremely complicated process, which is, of course, the general change-over from the static or cyclical view of human existence to the evolutionary view. Evolutionism is, fundamentally, a scientific concept. Therefore, if my suggestion is correct, the term *avant-garde* is not simply a military metaphor, used first in politics and then transferred to literature and art; it is basically connected with science, and with what is sometimes called the scientific revolution, the replacement of the medieval belief in a finished universe by the modern scientific view of a universe evolving in time. The

scientific view affected political and social thinking long before it penetrated into literature proper and the fine arts; this is why the metaphor is political before being literary and artistic.

IN FRANCE, THE FIRST REAL SIGNS of the modern evolutionary view occur in the 17th century at the time of the Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns, but the beginnings of the development can, of course, be traced back to the Renaissance and, beyond the Renaissance, to Ancient Greece where most things existed in embryo. In 17th-century France, the first pale dawn of the scientific view seems to have had little or no effect on the aesthetic attitudes of creative artists, or at least on those attitudes that were part of their conscious make-up. The extraordinary flowering of French neo-classical literature is contemporaneous with the Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns, yet owes practically nothing to it. The works of Corneille, Racine, Molière, Mme de la Fayette and La Bruyère are brilliantly original, but, strangely enough, are not accompanied by any definite doctrine of originality. On the contrary, the prevailing note is one of subservience to antiquity. The eminent Racinian scholar, Raymond Picard, claims that Racine's tragedies were, in their day, *des œuvres d'avant-garde*, but this was true only objectively, not subjectively. Racine clearly had a static view of human nature. He wasn't trying to say anything new. He thought he was creating timeless aesthetic objects, embodying permanent and universal truths. And even the famous thinkers of the earlier part of the *grand siècle*, Descartes and Pascal, who made mathematical and scientific discoveries, were not looking forward to the future in the modern manner. It is true that as they tried to put their conflicting ideas in order, they made many explosive statements. But we have no reason to believe that they themselves knew just how explosive their thought was. In 17th-century France, the Counter-Reformation and Counter-Renaissance atmosphere was so strong—on the intellectual, if not on the aesthetic level—that it seems to have caused an eddy in the stream of historical consciousness, with strikingly beneficial results for literature because, other things being equal, literature is easier to produce in an atmosphere where the general values of society appear to be settled.

However, in the 18th century, there was a

dramatic change that has often been commented on. Although scientific evolutionism was not yet fully established, the major thinkers of the French Enlightenment foresaw, or sensed, its implications. Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot and Rousseau, all of whom had some knowledge of science, were in a sense sociologists, trying to understand human life as a dynamic process in time, and as a secular process, which cannot be accounted for in religious terms, and more especially not in terms of the Christian revelation. This is true, I think, even in the case of Voltaire and Rousseau who were technically deists, and not agnostics or atheists. Their deism, although they themselves may have sincerely believed in it, was only a kind of surface dressing over what is essentially a secular enquiry into the nature of man and human history. Like their fellow *philosophes*, they were thus brought into conflict with orthodox Christian theology, which is based on the belief in a relationship, which can be called static, between man inside time and God outside time. The great controversy between science and religion, which was not to occur in England until the middle of the 19th century with the formulation of evolutionary theory by Darwin, had, to all intents and purposes, run its course in France by the end of the 18th century.

This, I think, is the fundamental reason why the conditions favouring the development of the *avant-garde* mentality were present earlier in France than elsewhere, and why the phenomenon was French before becoming European and American. In France, by the end of the 18th century, the modern evolutionary and secular view of the world had pervaded the consciousness at least of the intellectual élite. The situation that Nietzsche was going to express so dramatically in the 19th century in the phrase: "God is dead," already existed before 1789. In fact, most of the great 19th-century themes are already present in the French Enlightenment: there are intimations of Hegel and Marx in Montesquieu, Diderot, and Rousseau; of Darwin and Freud in Diderot; of Freud and Sacher-Masoch in Rousseau; and of Freud, Sacher-Masoch, and Nietzsche in the Marquis de Sade. We might even say that the Marquis de Sade was the first great modern figure to go mad through the death of God, and that this is why he has been resuscitated so fervently during the last half-century or so as the darling of a number of different *avant-gardes*.

IN OTHER WORDS, the intellectual watershed, as I see it, is the Enlightenment, and French Romanticism, when it occurred in the 1820s, was only an episode, although a flamboyant one, in post-Enlightenment history. Romanticism brushed away a great deal of the neo-classical aesthetic which had survived, in spite of the intellectual changes, until the early years of the 19th century. It developed the Promethean element that was inherent in the Enlightenment, but it was also in many ways retrogressive, and was much affected by its coincidence with the Restoration, *i.e.*, with an attempt to put the clock back socially and politically. However, by now, a century-and-a-half later, it is undeniable that not only France but the whole world is living to a very considerable extent according to post-Enlightenment attitudes, which co-exist alongside remnants of pre-Enlightenment attitudes. During this century-and-a-half, many sincere, ingenious and elaborate attempts have been made to effect a compromise between the modern scientific view of the universe and the old Christian view, and the French themselves, from Auguste Comte to Henri Bergson, Father Teilhard de Chardin and Simone Weil, have been particularly active in this field. But it seems obvious to me that no reconciliation has been brought about. The two different ways of looking at things exist side by side, and the extremely tangled aesthetic history of the last 150 years—not to speak of the social and political history—can be seen in terms of the tensions between these attitudes and of the growing predominance of the scientific world-view, which is often apprehended more emotionally by non-scientists than by scientists.

WHAT THE ENLIGHTENMENT did was to see history as the continuously unfolding tale of human life on earth, backed, of course, by the much greater time-scale of the evolutionary development of the universe. This view presents human life as a process in time, which we can elucidate to some extent as we look back or speculate about as we look forward, but which has no definable relationship to anything that might exist outside time, *i.e.*, to eternity or God. Indeed, eternity becomes increasingly unthinkable; there is only the ribbon-like process of time which is secular in the full sense, *in saecula saeculorum*. This is what is meant by "the death of God," and

this is why those theologians like the Bishop of Woolwich, who are disturbed by the scientific view of the universe and cannot keep their religious beliefs and their vision of the material world in separate compartments, are trying to evolve what is called "a theology of the death of God." The death of God means not only that there is no personal entity behind the universe to provide us with a moral law, but also that human life can only be given a meaning, if it has any, within the flux of history. And, if I may be allowed my largest generalisation, I would say that the increasing prevalence of *avant-garde* attitudes is a growing effect of this feeling that we live only in time and have to find our values in time. (I say "feeling" deliberately, because in many cases it is not a clear philosophical awareness and it doesn't need to be to produce the effects we see around us.)

*Avant-garde* artists and thinkers sense the problem of finding values in flux and they are trying—often perhaps neurotically—to espouse what they think is the movement of history by anticipating the crest of the next wave (*la nouvelle vague*), or alternatively they may be trying to escape from the dilemma of perpetual movement by finding some substitute for eternity, *i.e.*, some God-substitute. Quite often, I think, they are trying to do both things at once, and this is why so many *avant-gardes* have both a progressive and a non-progressive aspect. In so far as they are non-progressive, the metaphorical expression, *avant-garde*, is a misnomer, because the movement is not forward, but to the side, or even backwards in time to pre-Enlightenment attitudes. It occasionally happens, for instance, that the *avant-garde* artist is consciously reconverted to Christianity, and usually to old-fashioned Catholicism, because it offers the best escape from flux.

I might add here, incidentally, that the *avant-garde* syndrome is much less noticeable in scientists than it is in artists and intellectuals. Although it is ultimately a result of science, it doesn't seem to affect the scientist *qua* scientist. I suppose this is because, in his work, he is in the happy position of not being concerned with human emotional values at all, and can take an optimistic view of time. He carries the past with him in the form of agreed, accumulated knowledge, and he can look forward to the future as a continuously deeper or more extensive reading of the book of nature on the level of verifiable fact. Scientific truth is, in itself, an escape from time, because it is cumu-

lative, and because the effectiveness of any part of it can be demonstrated at any moment. But the artist and the thinker are concerned with works of art and intellectual theories, about which there is by no means the same degree of cumulative agreement, and they cannot collaborate with each other in the production of an impersonal truth in the way that scientists can. When George Bernard Shaw said that he stood on the shoulders of Shakespeare, he was deluding himself with a false analogy between science and art. Lavoisier stood on the shoulders of Joseph Priestley and Einstein on those of Newton, but artists and thinkers cannot build a progressive monument in this way.<sup>2</sup> They are almost totally involved in flux, and their situation has become steadily more critical in this respect since the 18th century.

## The Death of God & Man

BEFORE THE ENLIGHTENMENT, that is in the days of Old Western Man, whether pagan or Christian, the work of art could be looked upon as a monument embodying permanent truths and existing in a sort of eternity, outside the life-span of the individual artist who had created it. *Exegi momentum aere perennius*. Fashions might change, but they did so unconsciously, and it was tacitly assumed, by cultures which did not look at themselves historically and scientifically, that their views about moral truth and aesthetic beauty were constants. Then, during the first phase of the Enlightenment (which continued well into the 19th century), there could be, and there was, considerable optimism about the possibility of arriving at the permanent truth of human nature, and it was thought that art might be used as an instrument in this search.

The French *philosophes* had looked back over history, had seen it as a record of success or

failure (but mostly failure), and had assumed that, by taking thought, they would evolve a concept of man that would allow them, or their successors, to correct the course of history. If history was such a record of crime and injustice, this was because it had not been conducted in accordance with the true nature of man. Once man had been defined as a natural phenomenon like other phenomena, without all the mythical accretions of the past, society would right itself, and the generations of the future would find themselves in a social context that would allow the full and harmonious expression of their inherent possibilities. Actually, this theory takes two rather contradictory forms, which are still very much with us today.

Rousseau popularised the view, although he did not wholly believe in it himself, that the true state of human nature had existed at some time in the past, that man had strayed from it by misadventure, and that the problem was how to return to it. In this hypothesis, movement towards the future involves peeling away layers of supposed civilisation, in order to get back to the purity of man's original being. I suspect that this is not a modern idea at all but an adaptation of the Jewish myth of the Garden of Eden and the classical Myth of the Golden Age, both of which have been present all through Western history in the pastoral tradition. It is an idea we all subscribe to more or less, even though some of us may limit our return to nature to eating whole-meal bread and taking brisk walks over Hampstead Heath. However, although a very tempting idea, it is an impossible one to handle coherently, since there is absolutely no means of deciding what should, or should not, be included in original human nature. Yet, at any given moment, someone is always asserting the supposed "natural" quality of a particular human feature or condemning some other feature as "unnatural," and the tendency is by and large anti-cultural, because if man ever had an original nature, it was presumably an animal one, and culture is something that has been added to it, or has grown out of it. We thus arrive at a paradoxical situation in which culture itself, which is trying to return to a supposed human nature, becomes anti-cultural.

NOW IT IS UNDOUBTEDLY TRUE that, in a sense, long hair is more natural than short hair and a certain degree of grubbiness more natural than cleanliness. It is also an interesting and

<sup>2</sup> I am leaving out of account, for the moment, the fact that there is such a thing as the evolution of artistic forms. Racine, for instance, did not invent French neo-classical tragedy from scratch. He had predecessors whose example helped him. But his success did not in any way help the writers of tragedy who came after him. For a hundred years they tried in vain to imitate him or to do something rather different in the same form, and their works are a graveyard of wasted effort. In other words, literary masterpieces are not elements in a continuous construction, as any great scientific invention is, but they may be end-products in a limited series.

instructive exercise to move back from culture into the animal world and to consider man as a naked ape. But is it a fact that animality is always truer than culture, as far as human beings are concerned? I don't think so, but ever since the Marquis de Sade, certain individuals have tended to assume that it is, and quite a lot of them have belonged to various *avant-gardes*. Egoistic self-assertiveness may be thought more natural than collective altruism, instinct and impulse more natural than reason, accident and randomness more natural than deliberate arrangement, inarticulate noises more natural than speech, and the body more natural than the mind. It is not uncommon to come across modern artists who are convinced that the less they know and the more empty they can make their minds, the nearer they are to the unsullied purity of human nature.

I once heard Dylan Thomas say, for instance: "The bigger the fool, the better the poet." This could be a way of asserting that the functioning of the poet's imagination should not be hampered by his intelligence, which is true. But this, and similar statements, can also be taken as justification for the belief that the way to get the creative imagination working is deliberately to blunt the intelligence, and the intelligence may be blunted without the creative imagination ever really beginning to operate—with a consequent drift into randomness and irrationalism. And once randomness and irrationalism have been accepted as principles, anything goes; naturalness and unnaturalness can be combined in any mixture. Thus, a belief in the naturalness of long hair can be combined with a fashion for wearing wigs, or one can organise a happening at which one deliberately takes off one's clothes in order to be spontaneously natural. In England at this very moment, curiously enough, in the matter of dress, three quite distinct degrees between naturalness and unnaturalness are almost equally fashionable—total nudity, deliberate unkemptness, and exquisite dandyism. And all three are found more or less in the same *avant-garde*, or in over-lapping *avant-gardes*. I am not complaining about this; such complexities have their charms, as well as their occasional disadvantages. I am merely trying to emphasise the uncertainties introduced by the idea of original human nature. One can never tell whether the next wave of the *avant-garde* is going to insist on naturalness or unnaturalness. Baudelaire, in his day, wrote beautiful poetry

about the ideal original human nature, at the same time as he declared that nature was hateful, and that women were particularly abominable because they were particularly natural. Huysmans, who was also a major *avant-garde* figure in his time, began by being a naturalist and then produced his famous book, *A Rebours* (1884), which is a systematic denunciation of nature in favour of artificiality. It is a rare case of an *avant-garde* book with a retrogressive title, directed against nature.

HOWEVER, I THINK the more serious version of the evolutionary theory assumes that human nature has never existed in any perfect form in the past, but will do so at some point in the future. This, it may be thought, is just an adaptation of another myth, the myth of the Millennium, and indeed the ideal society foreseen by some of the 18th-century thinkers has been dubbed the Heavenly City of the Philosophers. Still, the myth of the social millennium is a noble myth; since it is genuinely progressive, it fits in to some extent with the scientific world view; it has induced a great many artists to put their shoulders to the wheel of social progress, and it has sometimes even enabled them to produce good art. At the same time, of course, it has had deplorable effects both in art and in life. It has often caused the present to be demolished for the hypothetical good of the future, and, in France particularly, it has led generations of artists to assume that, since the ideal society lies in the future, they must maintain an attitude of unrelenting hostility to the existing state of affairs.

Needless to say, there are always very good reasons for criticising the present, especially if society is as firmly entrenched in certain philistine attitudes as the bulk of French society was in the 19th and early 20th centuries. I am not asserting that the attitude of extreme negativism which begins, let us say, with Baudelaire and continues through Rimbaud, Alfred Jarry, the Surrealists, Artaud, Sartre, and others, is unmotivated; far from it. But the forward-looking self-righteousness of the *poète maudit*, who is alienated from his average contemporaries, and will only be appreciated by posterity, has become just as much a cliché as the conventions against which he is supposed to be revolting. It has long been axiomatic in France that the artist has to be a rebel, an outcast, a demolisher of old forms, a hater of the bourgeoisie, an exceptional in-

dividual who lives according to his private anticipation of the laws of the perfect society of the future, not according to the *defective* rules of existing society. In practice, he can rarely achieve this standard completely, and he may not achieve it at all, so that in fact he is often not really a *poète maudit* but that very common French type, the anti-bourgeois bourgeois, who accepts society more or less as it is, while at the same time entertaining a set of intellectual and aesthetic notions which are contradicted by his actual behaviour. I get the impression that a comparable type is becoming increasingly common in England and America and often provides both the artist and the public for certain kinds of *avant-garde* art. The novelty of the situation is not in the contradiction itself; in the old days there was a permanent contradiction between behaviour and Christian doctrine. The new feature is that religious values have been replaced by emotional and intellectual assumptions, often unanalysed, about the relationship between the present and the future. The contradiction was clearly illustrated two years ago by the success of the play *Les Paravents* by Jean Genet, a powerful and nihilistic denunciation of society, which was brilliantly staged by the National Theatre. This was an almost perfect example of a society applauding its own negation.

I NOW COME TO WHAT I think is the crux of the matter. The fundamental development that has taken place in recent times is that the Enlightenment's hope of achieving a definition of human nature has come to seem more and more illusory, at least to a number of important thinkers and artists. When the *philosophes* assumed that it would be possible to define the nature of man and create the perfect society, they imagined they were looking towards the future, but in fact they were falling back on to a static conception. The accumulation of knowledge has shown not only that man is part of the evolutionary process, but that, being an animal with culture, he is an exceptionally

mobile part. It is possible to talk about the nature of the non-cultural animals, such as the lion or the tiger, because it hasn't altered appreciably in the course of recorded history. But the more we learn about man, the more we realise that his so-called nature has included such a bewildering variety of customs, attitudes, beliefs, and artistic products that it is impossible for any one person to comprehend more than a very small part of the possible range. Moreover, we are more aware than ever before of the complex and mysterious forces at work within ourselves, and which we do not wholly understand. Consequently, it would take a very confident man today to echo the line from Terence which was a slogan of 19th-century humanism: *Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto*.

In other words, as some modern thinkers—particularly French ones—like to put it, the death of God is now being followed by the death of Man. However much some people may wish to reject the past, precisely because they find it so difficult to contemplate, the knowledge of it weighs upon them as an immense repository of largely unassimilable data, while the future stretches ahead as a vista of endless and ultimately meaningless change. The sheer fact of living in time becomes then an existential anguish, because history is no more than a succession of moments, all in a way equally valid or invalid, and human nature ceases to be a unifying concept and is no more than the name we give to the successive appearances of man.

And, of course, this anguish of living in time is accompanied by the twin anguish of contingency, which is the sensation of scientific law running through animate and inanimate nature, without any intelligible reference to the human consciousness and emotions. Hence a metaphysical dizziness or a nihilistic despair about the very concept of human nature which can combine in all sorts of complicated ways both with the pastoral myth of original human nature and the millennial myth of future human nature.<sup>3</sup>

LET ME INDICATE very briefly some of the consequences of this in *avant-garde* art.

It is because man has been trying, since the Enlightenment, to understand things rationally and scientifically that he has arrived at these dilemmas. Hence a widespread disgust, often a fascinated disgust, with the idea of science and

<sup>3</sup> A student has pointed out to me that what I call the pastoral myth and the millennial myth may be just the old opposition between Platonism and Aristotelianism: the belief in the pre-existing ideal *versus* the belief in development from the embryonic to the ideal. If these are two basic modes of functioning of the human mind, the fact that neither can be fully accepted nowadays would in itself be enough to cause intellectual panic.



a further justification for the flight from reason. Hence also a search for methods of producing a sensation of mystic depth, in other words, an apparently meaningful, although incomprehensible, relationship with something beyond average existence, *i.e.*, the transcendent. The use of alcohol and other drugs for this purpose has been widely publicised recently, but it has been a commonplace since Baudelaire invented the expression "artificial paradises." It is also paradoxical, because it is a scientific method, although a crudely applied one, of blurring the scientific vision. It has occasionally helped—but always, I think, accidentally—in the production of imaginative masterpieces, such as *Kubla Khan*, but it is also responsible, I suspect, for a vast output of so-called works, which are really examples of psychological randomness, and must be incomprehensible to the authors themselves, once they have emerged from their drugged state, and to other people, whether *in* or *out* of the drugged state.

Even without drugs, randomness may be turned into a sensation of mystery. If nothing can be given a meaning in the general flux, everything can be given a sort of mystic weight, through being contemplated in a state of Existentialist awareness, which may range from hysterical euphoria to nausea. In its extreme form, this awareness even eliminates the need to create a work of art. Anyone can be his own artist, simply by picking up a stone or a found object or drawing a line around some fragment of the given world and seeing it as an embodiment of mystery. This helps to explain *collages*, cut-outs, and the ramifications of the Cult of the Object amongst Surrealists, Existentialists, and other *avant-garde littérateurs*. Two or three years ago, I had the experience, in an art gallery, of finding a heap of sand on the floor and having to ask the proprietor whether it had been left behind by the builders or was meant as an exhibit. In this particular case, it was an exhibit. Obviously, a heap of sand, however beautiful and mystic, is not meant as a permanent work of art. It cannot be picked up and carried away in its heap-form. It is simply a momentary object of attention that can be replaced by others. Therefore this attempt to see eternity in a heap of sand links up with the sense of cultural and social mobility which led Sartre to liken books to bananas. The two attitudes come together to make works of art part of the flux in which we live, instead of would-be permanent monu-

ments. Hence the development of what is sometimes called "throw-away art": the work of art is like a flower that wilts after a day, or a culinary masterpiece that is eaten, or a dress that goes out of fashion after a week or so. It has constantly to be replaced by something new, although the new may be a haphazard revival of the old. The latest evening dress may be grandmama's petticoat that has been rediscovered in an attic, or a uniform from the Boer War. In this case, it is also, of course, by its very nature an ironical—but perhaps unconscious—comment on the fact that we exist only in terms of ephemeral fashions.

### *The Meaning of Meaninglessness*

RANDOMNESS is also connected with the dream on the one hand and, when it becomes frantic, with madness on the other. Both are forms of unreason that have been much cultivated by different *avant-gardes*. The interesting point here, I think, is that while medicine and psychiatry, which are scientific in intention, try to interpret dreams and madness in rational terms, some *avant-gardes* have reverted to the mediaeval attitude and accept the dream or the madman's perception as a truth that is higher than the truth of the waking mind or of sanity. This is particularly noticeable among the Surrealists and their descendants, who have taken Rimbaud's prescription about *le dérèglement de tous les sens* very seriously, and who use Freud as an excuse for an irrationalism that Freud himself would not have approved of. It seems to me that they often confuse unreason with the imaginative faculty, both in their doctrines and their works. I agree that reason is not enough. Reason cannot invent. Invention is a leap into the future which depends on imagination or intuition, whatever we may mean by these words, and reason can do no more than test the results of invention. But I remain convinced that all genuine works are connected ultimately with the rational faculty, and indeed feed the reason and help it towards truths that it can eventually define in its own terms. Many *avant-garde* productions, I suspect, are altogether beyond the reach of reason, and therefore lie in an area of random meaninglessness.<sup>4</sup>

But here again all sorts of contradictions

<sup>4</sup> Another student has objected that the concept of the random makes no sense. All impulses must be determined; therefore, whatever the artist produces corresponds to something in his psyche, and

occur. For instance, the *avant-garde* playwright, Eugène Ionesco, professes a conscious belief in the dream and randomness, yet his plays are for the most part examples of imaginative order that can be discussed rationally, *i.e.*, his practice is, in my view, much superior to his theory.

SINCE LANGUAGE is normally the vehicle of articulate meaning, it is in connection with language that the problem of meaning versus meaninglessness occurs most acutely among *avant-garde* writers, but in a form that I, for my part, find rather surprising. I would have thought that anyone wishing to appease his thirst for mystery has only to contemplate language as we use it every day. Since no genius has arisen to explain to us how language works, there is a sense in which even reasonable statements are extremely obscure and can give rise to mystic wonder; at least they do so in me. If I had to establish a hierarchy of mystery, I would say that imagination is more mysterious than reason, but reason much more mysterious than unreason. However, many *avant-garde* writers do not see linguistic phenomena in this light. For some, all the ordinary uses of language are too comprehensible, and so they

it is presumptuous to judge this something in the name of "reason," which may be no more than a system of bourgeois conventions dating from the 18th or 19th centuries.

I agree that "random" is to some extent a metaphor; I am not using it in the sense of "totally undetermined." I mean that the phenomenon is momentary and has not been satisfactorily fitted into any overall pattern by the artist himself. Nor am I defending a static concept of reason. "Bourgeois reason" is just as unsatisfactory a cliché as any other, since reason is a continuous process of digestion and ordering of data (*cf.* Lalande, *La raison et les normes*).

The problem in artistic production and criticism is:

- (a) that the artist himself can never be absolutely sure that he has succeeded in creating a valid imaginative pattern. Past examples show that he is not necessarily an impeccable judge of his own work;
- (b) that the critic can never be absolutely sure of the rightness or wrongness of his reactions. Again, past examples show that he is sometimes right, sometimes wrong.

There is no way of avoiding the perpetual debate between the artist and himself, the critic and the work, and the critic and himself. "Culture" is surely bound to be this endless dialogue between imagination and reason.

adopt various methods of breaking through language, as it were, to a mystery which is supposed to lie beyond it, or of putting words together in a fashion which is meant to provide an escape from flux, yet without being an expression of any permanent human nature, as the classical work was supposed to be.

At one end of the scale are those poets who dispense with the existing languages altogether and replace them by collocations of more or less onomatopoeic sounds. These sounds are perhaps intended as a return to the voice of man's original pastoral nature, like the barking of dogs or the mooing of cows, or perhaps they are supposed to make us feel that all language is futile, since no language provides the key to the meaning of the evolving universe. Then come those poets who treat words as objects, like the objects of the *avant-garde* painter or sculptor, and try to dissociate them from the articulate meanings they might have in a sentence. Of course, poets have always been aware of words as objects with a shape, a rhythm and a feel in the mouth, but traditional poets combined this sense of words as tangible entities with the elaboration of more or less coherent statements. Coherence is now such a despised characteristic that many writers try to eliminate it, as the so-called literary element has been removed from painting and sculpture. The poem is meant to be a sheer juxtaposition of words which doesn't allow the mind to pass through it in the usual way and so slip back into the flux of time. The normal comprehension of any sentence is, necessarily, an act in time, so that if you can halt comprehension, the words become, or may appear to become, ultimate fragments of the universe, producing a semblance of eternity. Hence the modern American saying: "A poem does not mean, it just is." Hence also the title of Susan Sontag's recent book of essays on various *avant-garde* phenomena: *Against Interpretation*, although it is again paradoxical to write interpretative essays to show that genuine modern art is impervious to interpretation.

However, I think there is a profound truth embodied in this kind of remark, and the attitude behind it has produced both good and bad poetry. It helps to account, for instance, for the qualities and defects of two very important French poets, Mallarmé and Valéry, who were *avant-garde* in their day, and of one minor contemporary *avant-garde* poet, Francis Ponge. In all three poets, the deliberately opaque use

of language can take the form of preciosity, which has been very prevalent in recent years in various departments of French literary and intellectual life. Preciosity may be a valid and brilliant means of extending the possibilities of language, but it can also be a facile and ostrich-like way of arriving at gratuitous mystery, especially in discursive thought. If a critical comment on a hermetic poem is as hermetic as the poem, how does one know that one is not dealing with a poem and a pseudo-poem, or perhaps even with two pseudo-poems?

FINALLY, and connected with what I have just been saying, there is the use of language to create a puzzle, a conundrum, or a game. This is not quite the same thing as a sheer object, since it allows a kind of circular movement of comprehension within the terms of reference of the game itself. When the chief exponent of the *Nouveau Roman*, Alain Robbe-Grillet, declares that a writer is someone who has nothing to say, I think he means that life is non-significant and that we know very little about human psychology. Therefore the writer produces a construct, put together according to his own arbitrary rules, or to rules founded on the unexplained realities of his particular temperament, and we are intended to enjoy it as a sort of metaphysical *trompe-l'oeil*. It has an appearance of meaning, since the language of which it is composed conveys sense up to a point, but it is really a self-sufficient linguistic labyrinth, from which the mind is not intended to escape. It offers no exit on to any reality other than itself. In short, in my opinion, it is often no more than an ingenious, sterile, solipsistic fruit on the tree of literature. Its over-deliberate arrangement is, in the last resort, equivalent to the randomness of some other *avant-garde* works. One can see why certain writers have felt compelled to move in this direction, without being convinced that they have found the best solution to their problem.

### *If All Time Is Equal*

I HAVE BEEN ABLE to indicate only a few of the ramifications of this vast subject, but I must now conclude. If this were an *avant-garde* lecture, and not a lecture on the *avant-garde*, I could end by mooing like a cow, or letting off fireworks or uttering *Ubu*-like expletives to emphasise the meaningless of the evolving uni-

verse. But I cannot quite bring myself to do this, and so I must assume that I am still not altogether convinced by the more extreme forms of the *avant-garde*, as I understand them. I am not saying that these forms of the *avant-garde* should not exist. I am strongly in favour of everybody producing whatever kind of art they can, as long as we are all free to say what we think about it. But, granted that the intellectual dilemma underlying many *avant-garde* manifestations is genuine and even tragic, I have doubts about the consequences that are sometimes made to flow from it.

I think that dramatic phrases such as "the death of God" and "the death of Man" can breed a great many misconceptions. If God is dead, for instance, this is not a new tragedy. The phrase must mean that God never existed, that he was always an anthropomorphic projection on to the backcloth of the universe and that man never had any relationship with eternity. It follows that the Book of Job or Lucretius may be making much the same point as the atheistic New Novel, only more forcefully, and this may be a cheering thought rather than a depressing one. It is surprising how many old literary bananas still have a lot of flavour. Thirty years ago, M. Sartre himself produced a notable banana, entitled *La Nausée*, which is still remarkably fresh. Similarly, although we cannot embrace all the manifestations of man, I don't see why we should therefore proclaim a humanism of the death of man. Even though we live in the flux of history and have no fixed and clear basis for our moral and aesthetic assumptions, I still cannot feel that they are arbitrary, and if they are not arbitrary, they have to be treated as mysteries, which we can go on trying to understand. Perhaps they correspond to something that might be called an evolving human nature, and that we might accept as a sort of open-ended working hypothesis.

And if all time is equal, there is no more need to rush impetuously into the future than there is to cling stupidly to the past; in any case we can only live in the present by borrowing from the past; we *are* the past which is living in the present. Indeed, the evolutionary view makes partisan attachment to any one segment of time rather vulgar. In short, although the universe may appear to be meaningless, I don't see why we should try to imitate this apparent meaninglessness in art or in thought, or try to palliate it by methods which fail to satisfy all our faculties.

## Our Oldest Friend

“LOOK OUT!” someone said. “Here comes Saxon.”

It was too late. Moving off the dance floor and pausing at the door with the blatant long sight of the stalker, Saxon saw us all in our quiet corner of the lounge and came over. He stopped and stood with his hands on his hips and his legs apart, like a goalkeeper. Then he came forward.

“Ah! This *is* nice!” he crowed, in the cockerel voice that took us back to the Oxford years. He pulled up a chair and placed it so that none of us could easily get out. It passed through our heads that we had seen that dinner jacket before. He must have had it since the last term at school. It was short, eager and juvenile in the sleeves and now his chest had bolstered it, he seemed to be bursting with buns and toffee. A piece of stiff fair hair stuck up boyishly at the back. He crossed his short legs and squeezed them with satisfaction as his sharp blue eyes looked around our circle over his strong glasses.

“How awfully nice.” For niceness was everything for him. “Everyone is here,” he said, and nodded back to the people on the dance floor. “Jane Fawcett, Sanderson-Brown, Tony Jameson and Eileen—I just missed them in Brussels, they’d just left for Munich—very nice catching them here. With the Williamses!”

He ran off a list of names, looking over one lens of the glasses that were not quite straight on his young enthusiastic nose as he spoke them, and marking each name with a sly look of private knowledge. We were the

accused—accused not so much of leaving him out of things, as of thinking, by so doing, that he *was* out of them. His short, trotting legs were infallible in old acquaintance. Names from the past, names that we had forgotten from school and then Oxford came out, and made our wives look across at us at first with bewilderment and then set them to whispering and giggling.

“What are you doing, Saxon?” someone said. “Are you still on the Commission?”

“In principle yes, in practice,” said Saxon, uttering his favourite words, “I’m the liaison between Ways and Means and the Working Party.”

“The liaison!” one of the wives said.

“Yes. It’s awfully nice. It works very well. We have to keep in touch with the sub-committees. I saw the Dustman the other day. He’s a Trustee now, he came in from Arbitration.”

“The Dustman?” Mrs. Selby said to her husband.

“Oxford,” whispered Selby. “Lattersmith. Economist. Very old. He was called the Dustman because he was very dirty.”

“Tessa’s father,” Saxon said. And as he shot the name of Tessa at us, he grinned at each of us in turn to see what could be found in our faces. There are things in the past that become geological. Selby’s face became as red as Aberdeen marble; some of us turned to sandstone; one or two to millstone grit or granite: that was how alarm and disclaimer took us.

“Your oldest friend,” said Mrs. Selby to her husband, grinding out the phrase.

"In principle yes, in practice, no," said Selby bitterly, mocking Saxon's well-known phrase.

"My oldest friend, if you please," said Thomas, always a rescuer.

"And mine!" two of us said together, backing him up.

"Is she yours?" said kind Jenny Fox to me.

"She is the 'oldest friend' of all of us."

WE LAUGHED TOGETHER loudly, but not in unity of tone. Hargreaves was too loud, Fox was frivolous, Selby was frightened and two or three laughs were groans. There was something haphazard, hollow, insincere and unlasting about our laughter, but Day saved us by saying in his deep grave voice to Saxon:

"We ought to settle this. Who *is* Tessa's oldest friend? When did *you* meet Tessa, Saxon?"

"Selby and I were at school with her, at Asaph's."

"You didn't tell me that," said Selby's wife to her husband.

"I tried to get her to come tonight," said Saxon. "She's gone out with the Dustman. He said they might drop in later."

Our wives put on stiff faces: one or two picked up their handbags and looked at the door on to the dance floor, as if they were going to search it, and even the building. The incident was one of Saxon's unanswerable successes but once more Thomas saved us. He said to Saxon:

"So *you're* her oldest friend."

And Selby said grimly: "Yes, you were at Asaph's a year before me."

"Saxon! You've been holding out on us," we said with false jollity.

One of the ladies nodded at us, and said to her neighbour: "They seem to be a club."

The pious pretence on the part of our wives that they did not know Tessa Lattersmith was, in its way, brilliant in our embarrassed state. It brought out the hypocrisy in Harry James who said in a light-headed way:

"She's married now, I suppose?"

"Oh no," said Saxon. "She's carrying on." And he meant carrying on, as it were, in the sense of working hard on the joint committee, himself informed because he was, after all, the liaison.

"You mean," said Mrs. Selby, "she hasn't found anyone's husband willing?"

"Shame!" said Saxon, as at an annual general meeting. "Shame!"

"Perhaps," said the kind young Jenny Fox, "she doesn't want to be married."

"She's very rich," said James.

"Very attractive," said Day.

"Big gobbling eyes."

"Lovely voice."

"I don't agree," said Fox. "It bodes. It comes creeping into you. It gets under your shirt. It seems to come up from the floor. Expensive clothes, though."

"Not like the Dustman's!" shouted Thomas, rescuing us again. "D'you remember? I used to see him at the station waiting for the Oxford train. He used to walk up to the very last bench on the platform, and flop down. I thought he was a tramp kipping down for the night, the first time. His clothes were creased as though he'd slept in them. He had that old suitcase, made of cardboard I should say, tied with string—and parcels of books tied up. Like Herbert Spencer. You know Herbert Spencer had to have everything tied to him? He sat there looking wretched and worn out, with his mouth open and his thick hair looked full of dust—a real layabout from the British Museum. He hardly got his feet off the ground when he walked, but sort of trudged, as if he was wading through sand. He must be well past 70."

"No, he's barely 60. Tessa's only 32."

"Thirty-seven," said Mrs Selby.

"He's 62," said Saxon. "Tessa is a year younger than me."

"The Lattersmiths were rich," said James again. "I mean compared with the rest of us."

"The Dustman's wife had the money," said Thomas. "She belonged to one of those big shipping families. Did you ever see her?"

She's like Tessa—oh, she comes after you with those big solemn eyes."

"We went to see her, didn't we?" Day said to his wife. "She saw Diana's necklace, her eyes were fixed on it. . . ."

"And my rings!"

"She just wanted them. Greedy. She couldn't bear it that Diana had something that she hadn't got."

"She wanted you as well," said Diana.

"Oh," said Tom, the rescuer. "There's nothing in that. Old Ma Dustman wanted me too, in fact she wanted all of us. 'I am so worried about Tessa, I wish she'd settle down. I wish she'd find a nice husband—now *you*, you're fond of Tessa, I'm sure.'"

"Shame!" called Saxon again.

WE HAD FORGOTTEN about him; he was sweating as he watched us with delight.

"No, it's true," I said to Saxon.

"And she couldn't have them, poor things," one of the wives said and the others joined in laughing at us.

James once more pushed us into trouble.

"Did you ever go on a picnic with them? I mean when they came down to School? No? Saxon, didn't you and Selby? Didn't you? None of your camp fires with damp sticks, thermos bottles and tea slopping over the tomato sandwiches. Oh No! And it never rained: old Ma Dustman had ordered sun down from Fortnum and Masons. They brought the Daimler and the butler came—how did they fit him in, I wonder? I bet he went ahead in the Rolls. He set tables and chairs. Silver teapot, the best Rockingham. . . ."

"Not Rockingham, it can't have been."

"Well, old Spode. Something posh. The butler handed round the stuff. I only just knew Tessa then. I had brought a girl called Sadie and Tessa brought a girl called Adelaide with her and Tessa said, 'I want you to meet Harry James. He's my oldest friend.' Sadie looked sick."

"It had started then?" some of our wives cried out.

"Long before that," I said. In the cradle."

"Exactly what she said just before we were married when you introduced me," said Mrs. Day to her husband.

"She said it to me at our wedding," said Mrs. Selby and, glaring at her husband, "I don't know *why*."

"I don't get what her fascination for you all was?" said sly Mrs. James.

"Oh," we all said largely in a variety of voices, "I don't know. . . . She was about. . . ."

"You know, I think it was sex," said Jenny Fox.

"Was it sex?" we looked at each other, putting as much impartiality as we could into the enquiry.

"Sex! Of course it was sex," said Mrs. Selby, putting her chin up and gripping her handbag on her knee.

"Not for me," said Harry James.

"Nor me." One wife squeezed her husband's hand.

"Why not?"

This dumbfounded us. We huddled together. Why had none of us made a pass. Were we frightened?

"You took her to picture galleries," said Mrs. Selby.

"Yes," said Selby. "She did nothing but talk about a man called Cézanne."

"That's it. A whole party of us went to Parma and she did nothing but talk of a man called Fabrice," said Tom.

"Fabrice?"

"Stendhal," said Saxon.

"I had Lawrence in Rome."

"There was always another man. Anyone have Picasso? Or Giacometti?" said James.

"Who did you have, Selby? Russell? Einstein?"

Selby had had enough. With the treachery of the desperate, he said: "She talked of nothing but you, James."

"No," said Tom the rescuer. "She can't have had. I had you, James."

"I had Tom."

"Day was my trouble."

"With me it was Bill."

"What a lovely daisy chain," one of the wives said. "The whole distinguished lot of you. Who's missing?"

"Saxon," Jenny Fox said.

WE ALL STARED accusingly at him. Saxon went on squeezing himself. He looked archly over his glasses.

"I had the Dustman," he said complacently.

We laughed but Mrs. Selby silenced us and said to Saxon:

"Go on. You're the only one who's telling the truth."

"She was always very worried about the Dustman," he said. "They're a wretched family. He scarcely ever goes home."

And at this, the band started again and Saxon got up and asked my wife to dance. We were left with Saxon's picture of that rich girl alone in the world. Before the evening was out he had danced with each one of our wives. We all grinned and said, "Look at old Saxon at the end of term dance."

If there was one non-dancer on the floor it was he. His feet, rather like the Dustman's, trudged, in straight, fated lines, deep in sand; enthusiastically deep. He danced, as it were, in committee. Our wives found themselves in the grip of one who pushed them around, all the time looking askance from side to side as if they were sections or sub-sections for which he was trying to find a place in some majority report. They lost their power to dance. The matter had become topographical to them; while he, as he toiled on, was running off the names of people.

"I saw him in Paris on the second day of the conference."

Or

"They were in New York when Foreign Relations met the working party."

Or

"They ran into one another in Piccadilly when the delegation met the Trustees. Thompson, Johnson, Hobson, Timson,

Richardson, Wilkinson"—our wives returned to us like new editions of *Who's Who*.

Except Mrs. Selby. She was much taller than he and on the floor she had the prosecuting look of one who was going to wring what she wanted out of Saxon. She did not look down at him but over his head at the piece of fair hair that stuck up at the back of his head. He soon had to give up his committee style. She got a grip of him, got him into corners, carried him off to the middle, turned savagely near the band and in this spot, she shouted to him:

"What's all this stuff about Tessa and the Dustman?"

And as she said it, seeing him turn to the right, she swung him round to the left and when the dancers were thinning on the floor she planted him in a quiet spot in the middle.

"Tessa's slept with all of you, hasn't she?" she said.

"Shame!" Saxon said, stopping dead. He took off his glasses and there was a sudden change in him. Often since, seeing that naked look on his face, I have thought: "How he must have hated us." I remember at school how we stuffed sausage down his neck and how he just let us do it. Sausage after sausage went down. Then off came the glasses and he backed to an open window. Now, on the dance floor, with his glasses off, Saxon suddenly began to dance—if that is the word for it—as if he had been stung. Where had he learned these extraordinary steps?—that sudden flinging wide of his short legs and arms, that strange buckling and straightening of the body, the thrusting forward and back of his punch-ball head, those sudden wrenchings of Mrs. Selby back and forth, and spinning her round, that general air of looking for a knock-out in the rebound off the ropes. Mrs. Selby's firm eyes were disordered as she tried to foresee his movements, and amid the disorder, she was magnetised by the fiendish rhythm of his feet and by the austere look of his unforgiving face.

"Hasn't she?" called Mrs. Selby, in a last piteous attempt.

THE BAND STOPPED and she stood there getting her breath in the middle of the floor. Saxon, without music, dropped back into the goalkeeper stance we knew so well, with his hands on his hips and short legs apart. She was staring at Saxon, he was staring at her. It was a long stare. Selby and his partner passed them and he saw what Mrs. Selby saw: obstinate tears were forming in Saxon's naked eyes; water filled them; it dropped on his pink cheeks. He took out his glasses and pretended to wipe them with his handkerchief and put them on. He was sternly, silently, crying. Mrs. Selby put out her hand repentantly; no doubt he did not see her hand but walked with her off the floor. We were clapping in the silly way people do and someone called out:

"Where did you learn that one, Saxon?"

He looked with bewilderment at us.

"I'll be back in a minute," he said, and walked across the room to the outer hall of the hotel.

Mrs. Selby put herself with kind Jenny Fox and whispered to her for a long time and Mrs. Fox said:

"It's not your fault. How could you know?"

"I only *said* it," Mrs. Selby said wretchedly, looking at the swing door that let cold air in from the outer hall when it flashed round and where Saxon had gone.

"What was the matter with Saxon?" Selby accused.

"He's upset—nothing," said Mrs. Fox turning to Selby as she patted Mrs. Selby's hand. And then, arguing for herself, Mrs. Selby told us.

Presently the swing door flashed and Saxon came back and three of us got up to offer him a chair. We gave him the best one, beside a low table which had a brilliant lamp on it. Instantly it threw his shadow on the white wall—a shadow that caricatured his face—the long nose, the chin that receded, the glasses tilted as he looked askance at us, the sprig of school-boy hair.

"They haven't turned up yet," he said.

We looked at our Saxon with awe. It was obvious he was in love with that rich, beautiful woman. He must always have been in

love with her. We had pulled her to pieces in front of him. What he must have been feeling as he pretended and as he submitted to our joke. And, after all this, she had not come. Where was she? One or two of us wanted to get up and find her. Where would she be? We could not guess. We had to admit that Tessa merely slummed with us. She would never think of coming to a second-rate hotel like this or to an old Asaphian's reunion. She'd be at some smart dinner party, something very grand—she certainly had "oldest friends" in very grand circles. One could imagine her low neck creeping up close to the conscience of an Archbishop. Or disturbing the shirt of an Ambassador, or her boding voice creeping up the sleeve of a banker who would be saying: "Young lady, what are all your hippie friends up to nowadays?" at one of old Ma Dustman's dinner parties. *She* would be stripping the jewellery off the women and telling Sir Somebody Something that one would be a fool to sell one's Matisses yet. The Dustman would not be there. We tried not to look at the unmarried silhouette of Saxon's head on the wall.

"Where did you pick up that wonderful step, Saxon?" Mrs Selby said gaily, to make amends.

Saxon gave a forgiving glance. He had recovered.

"At the Cool It," he said.

"What's the Cool It?" Thomas said.

"A Club," said Saxon.

"Never heard of it."

"In the docks," said Saxon.

"The docks?"

Saxon in the docks! The liaison committees in the docks! Saxon in low life! Saxon a libertine!

"What on earth takes you to the docks? Research? Come clean. Having fun?"

In our repentance, we made a hero of him. The old sly Saxon, pleased and pink, was with us again.

"In principle, yes," said Saxon. "I sometimes go with the Dustman."

We could not speak. Saxon and the Dustman in the docks!



"What is it—a cellar?"

"It's a sewer," said Saxon complacently. "Tessa goes there with her father."

"The Dustman takes his daughter to a place like that!"

"He says it will loosen her up," said Saxon, looking for hope in our eyes. "You see, he wants her to get married."

Saxon settled back, impudently, comfortably, in the chair. The brocade enriched him and he maliciously considered us one by one.

"To a stoker?" said Selby.

"No," said Saxon. "To me—in principle. That's why I go down there. You see, she's worried about him. We go down to see he doesn't get into trouble. I had to pull him out of a nasty fight last week. We got him out. We got him home. To her place. He hates going to his."

The notion of Saxon fighting was as startling as his dance.

"She must be very grateful to you," we said politely.

"Why do you say 'marry you in principle'?" said Selby.

"He means," Mrs. Selby explained sharply to her husband, disliking the mockery, "the Dustman is her oldest friend, older even than Saxon is. Isn't that so, Saxon?"

"In practice, yes," said Saxon, entirely forgiving her. "I'll go and have another look for them. They promised to come. The Dustman said it would be awfully nice to see us all again. I'll just go and see."

And he got up and trotted across the yards of hotel carpet that had a pattern of enormous roses. It seemed that their petals were caressing him on his way to the door. The door spun round and Saxon vanished.

OUR WIVES SAID: "What a sad story!" and "What a bitch that girl is." But we thought: "Good old Saxon." And "He's suffering for us." Selby put it crudely, saying: "That lets us off the hooks." And then our feelings changed. There was Saxon sitting like a committee on his own feelings, delegating them incurably to sub-committees, and sitting back doing nothing, relying on

an amendment. He must have been doing this for the last eight years. But this led us to another feeling. *We* would never have behaved as Saxon behaved. Each of us saw that beautiful girl in our minds and thought we would have soon pulled her out of this ridiculous obsession with the Dustman and his low life. And how often we had heard of coquettes like Tessa settling down at last in their thirties with faithful bore: like Saxon, men they had snubbed over and over again before that alarming age caught them out.

We kept our eyes on the main door of the hotel and were so fixed on it that we did not notice, at once, a figure crossing the dance floor at our side and looking in at us.

"Well!" we heard Tessa's slow, only too well-known voice, dwelling raffishly on the word so that it meant "What are you up to? You didn't think you could keep me out of this." Her large solemn eyes, as blatantly short-sighted as Saxon's were, put their warning innuendo to each of us in turn and the mouth of a beautiful Persian cat possessed us one by one. The spell was on us. A comfortable mew to each of our wives indicated that she had known us years before they had.

We were nearly screaming for help. It was for Thomas, the rescuer, to save us.

"Saxon has just gone out looking for your father."

She was up from her chair at once and making for the main door. She had fine legs, a fast passionate step and Mrs. Selby said of her dress:

"It's expensive, but pink is hopeless if you're putting on weight."

But Selby, over-eager for any hope that could be got out of the situation, said:

"Did you see her when she came in? It was exactly like Saxon. Hunting. You know—in principle yes, but in practice—well. She's a liaison too. I think the Dustman's loosened her up and found the man for her."

But no one paid much attention to Selby for the swing doors flashed and across the hall came the Dustman, Saxon and Tessa together.

"Look, daddy," she said to the old man. He had not, of course, changed into a dinner jacket and his tweed jacket was done up on the wrong button. His trudging step, I thought, was not so much a trudge, as a scraping caused by the probability that he was swinging by an invisible rope hooked to the seat of his learned trousers.

"Look," she said, "all my oldest friends!"

And Saxon stood apart with his hands on his hips, watching, his legs apart, keeping

goal, wistful, admiring, triumphant.

"Who's dancing?" piped the old man. And soon all of us were on the floor, the Dustman shoving Mrs. Selby along as if to her doom, and Tessa following him with her eyes all the time, as Saxon leapt into his passionate, dreadful and unavailing antics all round her. Once in a while she would note where he was, open her mouth to say something pleasant, and then coldly change her mind.

### Confrontation

When we finally met, the hatred  
That for weeks had been savoured  
Was drained of taste:  
We let it fall.  
We looked at each other without fear,  
With shyness and curiosity,  
No loathing at all.

The impulse to smash bone and tear flesh  
Was gone; no aftertaste  
Lingered and sickened.  
One did not forgive:  
Forgiveness and blame were irrelevant  
As knuckle-duster, cosh, revolver,  
Or slick shiv.

My need was for the affection  
I felt for him, and he  
I am sure wanted mine.  
Courteously we waited,  
Uncertain, yet each with the knowledge  
That through the bonds of her body  
We were related.

I felt a rare generosity,  
A kinship and sympathy;  
Believed, in us both,  
These might uncover  
New areas of magnanimity  
Dismissing such trivia as who  
Was husband and who lover.

*Vernon Scannell*

## A Desperate Measure

There are 86,400 seconds in every 24 hours;  
Each second's tick marks the birth of 100 professors—  
*Id est*, a daily 8,640,000 of 'em—  
Emergent from wombs ranging from Chile to Birmingham.  
An enormity, you cry? Excellent! You understand me.  
Here are my well-argued reasons for believing that from now on  
They should be strangled in their cradles, every last one:

In my distinguished decades as reviewer, critic, editor,  
I have been obliged to read—and all of them by professors—  
8,093 books or full-length studies about Kierkegaard;  
9,002 " " " " " Thackeray, Leopardi;  
19,001 " " " " " Dante, Goethe, Hardy.  
About *Daniel Deronda* and the tireless George Eliot generally,  
7,100—which is understating her figure generously. Now, I  
Will omit tons of other lumber of a like timber and go on  
To cite briefly what I have had to stomach with acidity  
Annually, in my long, honourable, dramaturgical capacity:

*All the above added together and then some* about Shakespeare;  
Roughly the same with knobs on about Sophocles, Fletcher, Dekker,  
Ibsen, Chekhov, Beckett, Sartre, Beaumont and Flecker,  
O'Neill, Aeschylus, Pinter, Wesker—yea, yea, Wesker e'en.  
These have fatigued me so disgustingly that there have been:

1,001 nights when I was impotent with women and had  
Scarcely the zest to tackle even a small boy;  
3,000 evenings when I threw up my hands,  
4,000 " " " " " " dinner.  
Every one of those writings was done by a professor, except  
When it was someone duller—I mean, Simone de Beauvoir:  
Not a one of them showed any sign of caution or terror  
At the prospect of the Last Judgment, *Dies Irae*, etcetera:  
Not a one of them cared whether I plugged on or died,  
Not " " " " stopped short of 100,000 words:  
Whence my cry to the world for professorial infanticide.

### Song

*They have nailed me to untenable hypotheses;  
They have used rusty six-inch nails from library doors;  
They have prodded my sides with interminable longueurs;  
They have soaked me with mugfuls of watered vinegar.  
Whole days that I might have spent in dancing and farting,  
They have obliged me to spend in fury, wincing and smarting.*

Dr. Dawkins—a professor himself, but only at a dirty  
 University, a sort of seat where you buy your Ph.D. for money  
 And they put together your *Daniel Deronda* for you—  
 Dr. Dawkins has suggested that one per million dons should be spared  
 For reasons solely of historicity. Each faculty, the globe over,  
 Covering every tangible -osophy and -ology, should endeavour  
 To submit one professor for sparing, justifying this by arguing  
 His exemplary tedium, his cuneiform writing, his clay tablets. I  
 Respect Dawkins' integrity, but I shall not talk turkey:  
 Mercy is always impractical and never really necessary:  
 I know, as Herod did, that there is no time like infancy.

Permit me to ask, moreover, just how much mercy  
 Was ever proffered by a professor to the immortal dead?  
 Did he not grapple them from the quiet sea-bottom with dull hooks?  
 " " " dry their juices in the dark, to purvey as egg-powder?  
 " " " cook their sweetest simplicities into hashes of complexity?  
 I mention this fact so that you will be entirely reassured  
 That in demanding an overall death-sentence, I am not just selfish:  
 I am also mindful of others—of the phosphorescent lustre of corpses.

"But will not many innocent babies who would never  
 Have grown up to be professors be strangled by mothers who are  
 Too impulsive by half, too spontaneous by nature?" Yes,  
 I grant this: now and then an infant that might have waxed  
 Into a bonny tax-collector, or a healthy Cuban guerrilla  
 Brutish enough to win the respect of Radicals the world over,  
 Will pay with his life for showing accidentally professorial stigma:—

*Item:* For dragging heavily on the delicious teat;  
*Item:* For filling his diaper with impermeable solids;  
*Item:* For looking, on being chucked, only glazed and stolid;  
*Item:* For gnawing the same plastic ring with one-and-the-same grin;  
*Item:* For eschewing the rich cluck, preferring the dense idiom.  
 But my breadth of vision allows me to shrug off injustices:  
 Such innocents will expire for the good of the whole—and not  
 So very many of them at that: normally you can trust any mother  
 To tell at a glance which child will be like which father or other.

"I shall not live to see this," I tell my son, "but it  
 Will come in your time."—"What!" he burbles:  
 "Not one more scramble through Blake's symbols?  
 " " " " trample through Boswell's gambols?  
 " " " " stumble over Howell and Lowell?  
 " " " " rumble down Marx's *Capital*?  
 " " " " fumble with Sainte-Beuve's genitals?  
 " " " " Rimbaud round Verlaine's arsehole?"  
 "Nary a one," say I: "no worse pedantry shall be heard  
 Than the plod of the hippo and the fall of his turd."  
 "Blimey!" says he: "if what you say is really true, Dad,  
 Being crucified meanwhile won't feel any too bad."

# Myrdal's Mythology

## "Modernism" and the Third World

WHETHER OR NOT the decolonisation of Asia and Africa leads in the end to the development of modern economies in those regions, it has already led to an enormous amount of theorising about how such economies might most expeditiously be produced. Most of the New States may not be prospering, but the analysis of why they aren't—and how they might—has become an intellectual growth industry of considerable proportions. The new lease on life which economics wrung from the Great Depression before World War II, the escape from the complacencies of academic debate into the excitements of high policy, has been sustained after it by the problem of third world poverty. It is an ill wind that does not blow economists good.

Yet, for contemporary economists, trained as they are to value hard distinctions and precise relationships, the passage south and east has proved even more of a looking-glass experience than the Keynesian revolution, with its urbane depreciation of popular virtues like thrift, self-reliance, and the long view. For in those hot countries the very world of numbers is awry. Meaningful aggregates are impossible to calculate. Financial magnitudes are severed from physical realities. Statistics are fantasy quantified. Critical variables are beyond practical measurement. *Ceteris paribus* is a poor joke.

PROFESSOR CLIFFORD GEERTZ is a leading American anthropologist. He lectures at the University of Chicago and is the author of *The Religion of Java* (1960) and editor of *Old Societies and New States* (1963). His contributions to *ENCOUNTER* include "Are the Javanese Mad?" (August 1966) and a widely-noted critical study of Lévi-Strauss, "The Cerebral Savage" (April 1967).

Faced with such a situation there are a number of tacks economists can take. They can hold fast to established practices, often driving them even harder in a kind of defensive reaction. They can try gradualism and attempt to modify those practices in such a way as to increase their relevance without sapping their power. They can throw the whole apparatus overboard and engage in what one of them has called "amateurish cogitations on vast themes." Or they can try genuinely to innovate—to construct novel forms of economic analysis. Like any group of intellectuals in crisis, they have—different groups of them—tried out all these available strategies, or, in some cases, scuttled uncertainly back and forth among them. In the West, the debate over the methodological foundations of economics flickers only around the edges of a massive enterprise in what Professor Thomas Kuhn would call "normal science." In the New States, where nothing is normal, it comes into the very centre of concern.

PERHAPS BECAUSE IT DEMANDS less mental readjustment, perhaps because it looks so relentlessly scientific, perhaps even because it carries with it a certain suggestion of superior intelligence, the first approach—the direct application of radically formalised theories of economic growth designed for Western conditions—has been the most popular. The heroic age of the incremental capital output ratio, with its assumption of a determinate relation between increases in aggregate investment and in aggregate income, may now be passing; but the amount of time men of large abilities have spent calculating chimerical S's, Y's and I's and attacking those of others will never be known. Nor, even if a certain realism has lately

appeared concerning the practical value of this sort of numerology in economies where the market system remains stunted, fragmented, and narrowly contained within traditional social bounds, the premise upon which it is built, that it is capital that makes the economic world go round, and therefore increases in capital which make it expand, remains extremely influential. The notion that, at least for underdeveloped countries, capital formation may be more a product of growth than its cause,\* and that the central driving forces of economic change lie in less mathematically accessible regions is still rather difficult for many economists to accept.

FOR THOSE who have, even if only hesitantly, begun to accept it, the first step towards realism has usually been the recognition that a purely physical definition of capital leaves out of account a rather important element, namely, people. This interesting discovery has led, in turn, to two distinct, but not unrelated lines of inquiry: into the social, and sometimes psychological, sources of entrepreneurship, the factors that encourage or hinder the emergence of a class of economic innovators; and into what has come to be known as "investment in man," that is, capital expenditures on education, health, and the like which, by improving the skills, knowledge, and vitality of a population, increase its capacity to produce and therefore, so it is assumed, its actual productivity.

Both these approaches, the one stemming, of course, from Joseph Schumpeter's fascination with the Napoleons of business, the other in large part from the American faith in the transformative power of popular education, are, in methodological terms, conservative. They are attempts to preserve an aggregate land, labour, and capital model of economic growth, with the capital element as the genuinely dynamic factor within it, by broadening the concept of capital to include "the human factor."

This last turns out, however, to be a rather more awkward variable than such a model, no matter how breezily one talks about "the supply of entrepreneurs" or about increases in agricultural productivity flowing from "a mixture of education, research, insecticides, high

yielding seeds, and a few tractors," can effectively handle. With its introduction, the whole world of social life, not (as intended) a few select and easily domesticated parts of it, breaks in upon economic analysis. From talking about "human capital" it's but a short step, especially when that capital turns out not actually to be quantifiable, and not actually to be capital, to talking about such airy entities as beliefs, values, sentiments, and institutions. And when that happens it is not just a few familiar concepts which have to be altered, but the whole direction of economic thought.

### *The Indian Dilemma*

IT IS THIS GAP between a model outworn and one not yet constructed that Gunnar Myrdal attempts to cross in his sprawling, earnest, outspoken, and ultimately unsatisfying new book, *Asian Drama, An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations*.<sup>1</sup> Twenty-two hundred and eighty-four pages long—the product actually of several hands, transient apprentices in Professor Myrdal's Stockholm workshop—the book is more assembled than written. There is hardly an image, a metaphor, a witticism, or a turn of phrase from one end of it to the other. What isn't said twice is said three times, and there are some things that are said every five pages. But, for all its leaden clumsiness, it grapples with the problems posed for economic theory by the turn towards the analysis of underdevelopment with a fixity of purpose that exposes not only their magnitude but the feebleness of our efforts thus far to deal with them.

Professor Myrdal pronounces himself an institutionalist, by which he means that he regards the central task of economics—or at least of the economics of development—to be the location, analysis, and modernisation of the social, cultural, and psychological factors which most powerfully affect economic behaviour. What he means by "modernisation" is not quite as clear, but in essence it comes down to the creation of the sort of institutional structure the West would like to think of itself as possessing, or at least very near to possessing.

The contemporary welfare state (and "at lower but rising levels of living, the Communist countries") with its high degree of social and economic equality, its ease of social and spatial mobility, and its thorough-going national integration, with a population marked

<sup>1</sup> London, Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 10 gns.; New York, Pantheon Books, \$25, paper \$10. A paper-back Pelican edition (3 vols. boxed, 75s.) has recently been published by Penguin Books.

by efficiency, diligence, orderliness, punctuality, frugality, enterprise, honesty, and the rest of the Protestant Ethic virtues, and with a commitment to a scientific world view free from "superstitious beliefs and prejudices," to popular sovereignty, and to the "moral solidarity of all mankind," embodies, or at least projects, the ideal of a humane modernity. A society of this sort stimulates growth, supports high standards of living, enlarges personal freedom, and promotes social, economic, and political justice. The goal of economic analysis should be, therefore, to determine how, for any particular underdeveloped country, or for all of them in general, this sort of society, or some reasonable approximation to it, can be brought into being. That is, it should seek to formulate the national policies which need to be pursued to encourage the appearance of a social order a European mind nourished on the compassionate rationalism of democratic socialism can approve.

India—which Myrdal's book is, despite its title, almost entirely about—is emphatically not now such a country. Worse, on Myrdal's accounting, it is not becoming more estimable, but less. Inequality and exploitation are increasing; the hold of superstition is growing stronger; political dynamism is evaporating as reactionary provincials displace reforming cosmopolitans from the centres of power; deepening local particularism threatens the very integrity of the state; and income per head, though probably not actually declining, is advancing at so slow a pace as to amount to virtual stagnation. What set out with Nehru's accession in 1947 to be a social and economic revolution, turned by his death in 1964 into a resurgence of petty plutocracy, moral cynicism, and mindless traditionalism. As much indictment as analysis, *Asian Drama* depicts a hypocrite India, loudly proclaiming progressive values and weakly surrendering to her own worst impulses.

MYRDAL IS IN SOME DOUBT as to whom most to blame for this unhappy state of affairs: Western economists bemused with their rarefied doctrines, or the members of the indigenous élite who have found in those doctrines an ideal device by which to profess radicalism while practising conservatism. By avoiding any consideration of the constitutional context within which economic policies have to operate, and in fact putting such considerations officially out of court, Western models of growth and con-

cepts of planning make it possible to protect vested interests in the name of economic rationality. "Casteism, communalism, provincialism, and linguism"—which, wrapped in a shroud of cow-worship, is largely what Myrdal regards traditional Indian social structure to consist in—are strengthened. The position of those whose power derives from these senseless anachronisms is enhanced by abstracting from the facts of life which really count in favour of those which are merely countable. In such a way, some of the more advanced aspects of Western civilisation combine with some of the more backward ones of Indian to propel the country not towards modernity but into a kind of no-man's-land between an intractable past and an unreachable future.

In short, the call for "institutionalism" is a moral as much as a scientific one. Indeed, Myrdal denies, as he has throughout his entire career, the very reality of this distinction. A disinterested social science is logically impossible; it has never existed, it never will exist, and claims that it does exist are conscious or unconscious attempts to avoid facing real issues or to conceal ideological biases. By directing attention away from the central drama of development—the clash between the rigid irrationality of traditional society and the creative dynamism of modern—the supposedly value-free models of contemporary economics, capitalist and communist alike, serve the cause of reaction when applied to countries such as India. Institutionalism, by bringing that drama into the focus of analysis and attacking the causes of inertia directly, enlists economics on the side of progress. Someone less inclined to turn scientific disagreements into wars of principle (as well as less totally committed to what has been called the Modernist Dogma: that in any conflict between the past and the present, the present is always right) can only wonder whether this Manichaeic view of the way things stand in southern Asia is really accurate and whether, that pedestrian question aside, it can lead to an analysis of change which is more than a long and unhelpful lament.

### *Land, Labour & Development*

GIVEN THREE VOLUMES, seven parts, thirty-three chapters, nine appendices, and 591 sections, Professor Myrdal and his assistants are able to cover a wide range of topics. The

first part concerns itself with methodological issues, the second with the recent political history of South Asia, the third with the general economic situation in the region *ca.* 1960, the fourth with planning, the fifth with labour utilisation, the sixth with demography, and the seventh with health and education, while the appendices take up a disparate series of topics ranging from the uselessness of accounting prices in planning or the instability of export earnings to the dissimilarity of European and South Asian nationalism or the effect of climate on economic activity. There is very little which has even the remotest possibility of relevance to economic development that is not at least touched on somewhere, and most of the crucial factors are discussed at length. In terms of mere coverage, only the sun-spot theorist has much reason to be disappointed.

In qualitative terms, however, most of the discussions are, especially after such a rousing methodological call to arms, surprisingly conventional—textbook summaries of what anyone with much knowledge of the region will already know and anyone without would be as well advised to get first-hand from the handful of standard and easily accessible sources on which the summaries are based.

The description of recent political history, traced out for Pakistan, Ceylon and South-east Asia as well as India, merely condenses what a few, themselves synthesising works—Spear, Moreas, and Pannikar on India, Callard on Pakistan, Tinker on Burma, Mills on Malaya, Furnivall and Wertheim on Indonesia, and so on—have already said in a more circumstantial and more critical manner. The survey of the general economic situation brings together a quantity of material from ECAFE and other statistical reports in a convenient but not very original way, and Myrdal himself insists that the data are so unreliable that he publishes them only to expose their frailty. The review of population problems is irreproachable for the most part, but about what one finds in any recent analysis of the situation. What little attention is given to “social context” consists of the usual unparticularised references to the supposed effects of religion, the subordination of women, and the extended family on attitudes towards birth control. As for the chapters on education and health, they are mainly compilations of almanac facts plus, in the first case an attack on the excessively literary emphasis in the Indian school system (held to be a result of

the ascendancy of Brahmin values in traditional society reinforced by office clerk ones in colonial), and in the second a celebration of the importance of rising standards of health in improving individual capacities for work.

Only in the part on labour utilisation, and to a lesser extent, related sections of the part on planning, is the slogan of “institutionalism” redeemed by trenchant and original, and therefore controversial, analysis. Only there (and in the more systematic reprise of these arguments in some of the appendices) does the rejection of recent economic thought in the West rise above the level of generalised complaint to that of substantial theoretical challenge.

IT IS LOGICAL, at least so long as one remains within a factors-of-production framework, that having rejected the capital-centred approach to development theory favoured, in different ways, by classical, Keynesian, and post-Keynesian economists alike, Myrdal would opt for a labour-centred one. Not only is it “always salutary” in economic affairs “to remind ourselves that ‘man is the measure of all things,’” but a view of growth from the perspective of the utilisation of the labour force both “brings us closer to crucial issues than do fiscal plans for public expenditure or calculations of aggregate output” and enables us to “take account of the role of attitudes and institutions, and the potential productivity-raising effects of improved standards of consumption in underdeveloped countries.” And, having opted for a labour-centred approach, it is logical that he would find the Achilles’ heel of the established approach in its concept of Unemployment. It is on an intensely reasoned and exhaustively developed critique of this almost Euclidean idea in modern economic theory that Myrdal’s whole argument for the necessity of “a more realistic”—read, “more sociological”—theory turns.

In fact, unemployment of the sort familiar to the West—men desirous of work of a certain kind but unable to find any, sitting at home and brooding or pacing the streets in fruitless search—is not very prominent in underdeveloped countries. Even in the most obviously depressed situations it is hard to find able-bodied (or even not so able-bodied) men who are not at least apparently engaged in some sort of gainful, if not necessarily very productive occupation.

In response to this potentially embarrassing situation, development economists have merely



extended the concept of unemployment to include so-called "under-employment," leaving the general structure of economic theory intact. Originally designed by Joan Robinson, under the rubric of "disguised unemployment," to take account of Western workers who in the great depression took jobs at a lower level of skill and productivity than those for which they had been trained—textile workers reduced to ditch-digging, and so on—the notion of Under-employment has become a central ingredient in the economic analysis of underdevelopment. Extended yet further to apply to "redundant labour"—workers, especially in agriculture, who are employed but add little or nothing to output—it has made it possible to continue to regard the process of capital formation as the prime mover of economic growth.

Indeed, it has led to the seemingly paradoxical view that agricultural (and, to some extent, commercial and governmental) underemployment forms a kind of unrecognised capital resource. "Disguised unemployment" turns out to be, at least *in posse*, "disguised savings."

As a large part of the rural labour force, the argument runs, is redundant (Arthur Lewis has estimated that at least a quarter of India's farmers, which would be perhaps some forty million persons, fall into this category), the transfer of large masses of people out of agriculture would, if work opportunities of any significant productiveness were made available to them, amount to an increase in aggregate investment. Agricultural production would not fall (a few enthusiasts have even claimed that it would rise) and, assuming the costs of this transfer and re-employment could be kept down and the consumption of the removed workers maintained around its original level, national income would increase.

For the labour reserve of classical economics, a pool of unemployed men absorbable into expanding industry by energetic entrepreneurs at "economic," that is, low, wage rates, development theorists have substituted that of redundant agricultural labour transferable by similar entrepreneurs or (more likely) by the state, into industry—or capital-creating public works—at similarly "economic" wage rates. In fact, if a technology at once labour-intensive, capital-saving, and modern could somehow be invented, it could turn mass poverty into a powerful engine of development which would, as the process of capital formation thus initiated became self-sustaining, progressively reduce the

poverty. What coal and iron were to the West, the workable stuff out of which technique and enterprise fashioned an economic revolution, the superfluous farmer, and perhaps as well the superfluous peddler and the superfluous bureaucrat, could be, given new technique and equivalent enterprise, to the third world.

MYRDAL'S ATTACK ON THIS cheerful doctrine is extended and complex, upending en route virtually all of its central assumptions—that the marginal productivity of agricultural labour in India is zero; that, like unemployment proper, underemployment is "involuntary"; that modern industry can, under some attainable factor-mix, absorb enough people to support a significant reduction in the rural labour force in the foreseeable future. But it boils down essentially to a single point: namely, that a purely quantitative, labour reserve view of "underemployment"—or what, harking back to a simpler idiom, he prefers to call "idleness"—is radically inadequate in India and South Asia because it fails to take account of the social setting in which production takes place.

In particular, it assumes a degree of elasticity in such economies at least roughly comparable to that found in Western ones, and this assumption, given the traditional nature of the institutional structure in which underdeveloped economies are embedded, is a wildly unrealistic idea. To talk glibly about the movement of large masses of workers from one form of employment to other more productive ones in a country in which a rigid caste system binds men by birth to specialised occupations, in which an entrenched Brahminic ethic depreciates the worth of manual labour, in which a half-capitalist, half-feudal tenure system promotes rentier landlordism and share tenancy at the expense of peasant proprietorship, in which irrational religious taboos reduce the participation of women in the work force and extend the lives of withered cows, in which an incomplete commercialisation of the rural economy supports a noxious crowd of small-time usurers, and in which local government consists of a committee of barnyard notables dedicated to seeing that this treasury of "economic debris and social decay" is preserved intact, is escapism or worse.

THE GENERAL CONCLUSION which flows from this conception of the situation is clear-cut: "Fundamentally it is in [the agricultural] sector that

the battle for long-term economic development will be won or lost."

Industry is not going to be able to absorb a significant proportion of even the increase in the labour force for a long time to come. Indeed, in the initial phases, industrial progress may be expected actually to lower the percentage of the total labour force engaged in manufacture. As for crafts and small-scale factory production, they will have trouble enough merely holding their own against imports and what large-scale industrialisation occurs, and their employment impact will consequently be but marginal at best. In the short run, virtually the whole of the very rapid increase in the labour force (an increase which, as its prospective members are already born, is demographically inevitable) is going to have to be absorbed into agriculture. Not only is no one going to be transferred out of farming, a great many just arrived adults are going to be "transferred" in. As crowded as the rural economy is now—nearly three-quarters of the population derives its livelihood from it—thirty years from now it may seem to have been positively frontier-like.

The implications for policy are, in turn, no less manifest: the main short-run effort must be a massive attempt to raise agricultural productivity. In part, this can come through an expansion of cultivated area, but mainly it must come through raising the per acre yields of land already in cultivation. In this effort, modern methods of farming and animal care have a central role to play, but the fundamental problems are again not so much technical as institutional, less a matter of capital formation than of inducing social reforms which will cause capital formation, as well as a number of other developmental changes, to occur.

Unless the caste system can be undermined, religious sentiment blunted, linguistic provincialism erased, the property system transformed, education made more practical, the sexual division of labour revised, outmoded medical practices suppressed, family size decreased, and the national government rendered impermeable to the designs of local vested interests, the necessary rise in productivity cannot take place. Agriculture will be able to absorb the expanded labour force only at the cost of an accelerating decline in the already abysmal standard of living and the suffocation of the few tentative movements towards modernisation that have somehow managed to appear in the countryside.

BUT IT IS AT THIS POINT that one's accumulating doubts about the whole line of argument can no longer be suppressed: granted that the patient's situation is desperate and quite probably worsening, that Western remedies are ineffectual, and that a kind doctor is no friend, what sort of mad prescription is this? A short-run social change of these dimensions is, even to Myrdal, whose conception of how societies work tends to be rather uncomplicated, scarcely conceivable, and not only under present political arrangements but under radically altered ones as well. Unless something is wrong somewhere in this analysis it would appear that, despite his repeated insistence, growing distinctly more forced as the book proceeds, that there is hope for India if only she will pull herself together, discard irrelevant theories, cease being a "soft state," buckle down to work, and launch the "big push," the country, like the South Asian region as a whole, is on a turnless road to disaster. Myrdal might like to be India's Marx; but he sounds more like her Malthus.

### *The Limits of "Institutionalism"*

FORTUNATELY, there may in fact be something wrong with it. And what sort of thing it might be is suggested by a peculiar characteristic of Myrdal's entire book: namely, that the image of India (and even more of the other countries of South Asia, which are employed here as a kind of *choros* to India's *agon*) is completely stereotypic.

For someone so intent on restoring sociological realism to economic analysis, Myrdal's portrayal of Indian culture and society is astonishingly abstract. Unnuanced and unparticularised, it is a thing of silhouettes and shadows—"caste," "landlordism," "superstition," "the village," "the masses," "provincialism," "nationalism," "the state"—a civilisation without qualities. It would seem impossible to write nearly a million words on a country with so rich a history, so profound a culture, and so complex a social system and fail to convey the force of its originality and the vitality of its spirit somewhere; but Professor Myrdal has accomplished it. There is no passage to India here, but only to some off-shore elevation from which its bolder features can be dimly and uncertainly seen.

And it is this conception of sociological analysis as consisting of broad discussions of gener-

alised categories which makes it possible for Myrdal to conclude that Indian tradition amounts to a vast collection of irrational, inert, unresponsive, but nonetheless tenacious obstacles to change. Archaic institutions, like caste, or Hinduism, or share tenancy, may, if enough outside pressure is brought against them by those who have by some miracle freed themselves from their grip, "disappear," "decay," "dissolve," "decline," or "weaken." With sufficient will and ruthlessness on the part of a modernising élite they can be "overcome," "demolished," "worn down," or "overthrown." But the possibility that they are in any way in themselves dynamic, that they can and might evolve, indeed be evolving, and that the processes of such evolution might be worth the sort of close and expert investigation given to, say, demographic or technological changes is apparently not even entertained.

Indeed, on this subject caution departs almost entirely in outbursts of mere indignation. "The writer knows of no instance in present-day South Asia where religion [defined as 'normally irrational . . . superstitious . . . a mystical rather than logical way of thinking'] has induced social change." As for the village, "that stronghold of stagnation," it is in no better shape—"the system of [elected village councils] . . . has not . . . thrown up any new leadership in rural areas," which remain in the grip of a "self-elected boss class" dominating a mass of "torpid" and "submissive" peasants who (quoting Zinkin) "*like* their society static." As for caste, the irrationality that ties all the other irrationalities together, it is "so deeply entrenched in India's society" that, despite all that has happened since Independence, "nothing very much [in respect of it] has changed."

Aside from wondering how Myrdal can be so sure of these things when he regards the by now quite extensive sociological and anthropological literature on South Asia as so bound to an undynamic outlook as to be unworthy of serious review and has not himself spent any significant amount of time in the countryside, there would seem to be some reason on the basis of what we know about social change in general to regard this dead lump view of the Indian aspects of India as more than a little overdrawn. It is, in fact, a crude and delusive caricature.

IF ALL THESE "barriers," "inhibitions," "obstructions," "obstacles" and so on which

Myrdal, rightly enough, regards as not exactly driving forces in modernisation are not only a great deal less rigid and inert than he thinks but are themselves well in the course of (admittedly, an externally stimulated) self-transformation, then perhaps it is not necessary after all to tear Indian society limb from limb in the course of a few decades in order to assure her material progress. It is still necessary to do much, most of it painful and a good deal of it radical, for no one would argue that the changes now occurring in India add up to a headlong movement towards modernisation. The struggle against the weight of the past is a real and desperate one in any underdeveloped country, and nowhere more than in India where indeed some very quaint customs persist. But it is a struggle which consists in shaping patterns of change already in motion, not in creating a nation out of nothing. The civilisation that looks to Myrdal to be drifting aimlessly in a sea of anachronisms is actually undergoing the greatest series of changes in its history.

As this is so, the image of an Asian Drama consisting in a struggle for a nation's soul between a masculine principle of rationality, diligence, discipline and facing of facts and a feminine one of irrationality, passivity, indiscipline, and self-delusion is precisely what it sounds like, an Occidental myth. If one looks not distantly and tendentiously, but closely and disinterestedly at the Indian institutional structure, one not only sees that it is not standing still, but that a consideration of the ways in which it seems to be moving yields a rather different view of the development process than arises from seeing it in terms of "the moral allegiances" of the modern European welfare state diffusing eastward. And one of the matters on which such a different view most clearly emerges is the "unemployment" problem.

### *Of "Work" & "Idleness"*

FOR IT IS ANOTHER curious characteristic of Myrdal's book that while he questions the applicability to Indian conditions of almost every received concept of modern economic analysis, he does not question that one which lies at the centre of his own approach: that of a demographically given "labour force." Here, he does not address himself to the obvious "in-

stitutionalist" issue: does the term "labour force" mean the same thing when applied to India as when applied to Europe? In its received, unsociological form is it not more likely to obscure than to clarify the Indian situation? He merely assumes the usual statistical definition of the concept—all able-bodied men and certain classes of women between, say, fifteen and sixty.

It is realised, in fact stressed, that the "participation ratio," the percentage of this "potential" labour force actually at work, varies notably from the European norm—there are fewer women workers, more café-sitting intellectuals, more small-scale rentiers, an excess of priests and mendicants, and so on. But his response to this fact is to urge an immediate correction towards the Western pattern—increasing the employment of woman, vocationalising education, asphyxiating rentiers, secularising Brahmins; that is, raising the participation ratios of the various idle groups. The possibility that the reverse process, the reduction of the per cent of the total population which is directly employed in manufacture, commerce, and agriculture may be a prerequisite to Indian development, that what is needed is not the suppression of "idleness" and the encouragement of "work" but their redefinition, is not even considered.

If it is true that the image of an India absorbing her exploding "labour force" over the next three or four decades by means of a rapid process of industrialisation along the Western model is a pipe dream, it is also true that the image of her absorbing it into a technically improved agriculture is scarcely less utopian, and for about the same reasons: rapidly rising productivity and rapidly increasing employment are, in the world which really obtains, contradictory aims.

The factor proportions in modern agriculture are indeed more flexible than in modern industry; but the notion that they are so flexible that such agriculture can absorb an enormously increased labour force while sustaining a significant rise in man-hour productivity is a delusion. What will happen under that sort of policy is (at best, and only for a while) a *pari passu* rise in output and employment which will leave everything about where it was in *per capita* terms. A generation hence India will still be getting ready to make its great move towards development with a larger population, an even more rigid agrarian structure and the same or

slightly higher, or (if agricultural economists turn out to be as over-optimistic about seeds and fertiliser as they usually are), even a slightly lower standard of living. If the labour-absorbing modern industry strategy provides no way out for a country with India's demographic situation, neither does the labour-absorbing modern agriculture strategy. To make a social revolution in its name is to break eggs for a very poor omelette indeed.

THE ASSUMPTION CONCEALED in the concept of a "labour force," that a place must be made in the productive system for everyone physically capable of filling one, is not valid for India and other densely populated countries of the third world. In so far as they make a transition to modernity at all, they will make it with working-age populations far in excess of what modern, capital intensive forms of production—industrial, commercial, and agricultural alike—can cope with. Their "unemployment" problem is not how to put all these tens of millions to work in the mills, shops, and farms. It is how to fit those who cannot be so employed, if such mills, stores and farms are to be maximally productive, into the emerging pattern of a machine society.

THE FRIGHTENING FACT about such countries is that at the same time that their adult populations grow with unprecedented speed the percentage of those populations engaged in what Westerners regard as "productive labour" must drop. This is in fact, as Myrdal, quoting the Thorneres, notes (and with his characteristic "labourism," deplores), what is actually occurring. Between 1901 and 1951, when there was essentially no change in the proportion of the population over fifteen (and what sectoral reallocation of the work force that occurred was *in favour* of agriculture), the number of workers per hundred men dropped from about 64 to about 54, per hundred women from 33 to 23. In Madras, where the India of the year 2000 is perhaps already stumbling vaguely into view, the figures have fallen even lower: 46 for men, 14 for women. Perhaps the superstitious, caste-bound, hypocritical Indian peasants know, in their diffuse and inarticulate way, something that Myrdal does not after all:

namely, that in contemporary Asia employment and productivity can be inversely correlated variables and that if everyone in India who is "eligible to farm" farms, they will all gradually starve.

With this view, that the productive system of a modernising India is going to employ the energies of a very much smaller part of her active population than did that of the modernising West, and that concentrating on improving agriculture (however valuable that may be in itself) is not going to do much to change this fact, puts a number of aspects of contemporary Indian social structure into a rather different light.

IT IS LESS CERTAIN, perhaps, that everyone ought to be vocationally trained, that transfers of agricultural income through rents to non-cultivators should be stamped out, that women ought to be encouraged to get out into the fields, that manual labour should be universally glorified, that traditional religious specialists should be condemned as parasitic, that the "educated unemployed" ought to be put behind ploughs. There are many things deeply wrong with these institutions—with share tenancy, with purdah, with Brahminism, with caste, and with the quality of thought in Indian cafés—and there is no doubt that they must be fundamentally reformed. But such reform must begin with a realisation that far from being simple irrationalities, they and the values embedded in them are responsive to one of the most critical developmental necessities of India: they tend to keep people outside the work force but inside the society.

The problems posed in creating a modern society in which a quite small minority of the population carries out what we tend, reflecting our own outmoded valuations, to call the "real" work of the society are enormous. Who is to be so employed? What are the rest of the people going to do? How is the whole system

going to be justified? What sorts of purposes are going to animate it?

THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS and others like them involve a revolution in outlook and a transformation of a pattern of social existence which will be, if it occurs, unlike those which produced modernity in the West, or even in Japan. And it will take a profounder and more resolute "institutionalism" than Professor Myrdal's to discover them. It will take a more circumstantial, less Western centred, and less moralistic analysis of what is really happening in India and what can happen; a sociology which is more than broad generalisations derived from "staple general reasonings" and "the values of the Enlightenment as expressed in the welfare state."

Institutional modernisation in India cannot be simply a matter of "wiping out" archaic customs and unpleasant attitudes. It must be a matter of directing a process of social and cultural change already in motion in the appropriate directions. India may stagnate; it may modernise under conditions ethically unacceptable and physically dangerous to decent men (a possibility Professor Myrdal, whose models of modernity are Sweden and England, not Germany and Japan, never openly confronts); it may evolve an institutional structure which can support both economic growth and humane values. But whichever it does, it will do in terms of an ongoing process which if it is to be controlled must first be understood.

Tomorrow's India will be born out of today's India. This is, indeed, the India of "casteism, communalism, provincialism, and linguism." But it is also the India of the Tamil sage Ramanuja who, when taught a *mantra* guaranteeing salvation but pledged to secrecy on pain of condemnation to hell, immediately climbed the temple tower and shouted the secret for all to hear because he accounted his own damnation a trifling price to pay for bringing salvation to so many people.

# An African Tragedy

*Kwame Nkrumah & Mr. Bing (Q.C.)*

*"Old politicians never admit defeat. Geoffrey Bing, ex-M.P. and Nkrumah's Attorney-General, was reluctant last night to accept that the Labour Party executive had killed his parliamentary comeback.... No explanation was vouchsafed, but a majority seems to have felt that his link with Nkrumah would be a liability.... "I would be interested," he said, "in having it reconsidered. What is it alleged that I've done? What was wrong with Nkrumah's Ghana?..."*

THE GUARDIAN (17 March 1969)

MR. GEOFFREY BING, Q.C., served from 1956 to 1966 as constitutional and political adviser to Kwame Nkrumah and was the Attorney-General of Ghana. Nevertheless, he appears in his autobiographical account of the fateful years<sup>1</sup> to be very anxious to play down his own personal role. He claims that he was no political adviser at all, but only a "technician" (pp. 20-21), and that "throughout I was a civil servant.... The civil servant (in Ghana) was confined within narrow limits. The country was run by Dr. Nkrumah, his Cabinet and the various Party and quasi-Party organisations which shared in the government" (pp. 37, 236).

Yet his own account belies his claim. When he was first appointed Constitutional Adviser he was not to advise on constitution matters at all, but on the Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the corrupt activities of the Cocoa Purchasing Company, a political instrument of the Convention People's Party (p. 171). Discussing the appointment of an Economic Adviser

to the first C.P.P. government he slips repeatedly into the use of the first person plural: "the type of experts *we* had in mind"; "... Dr. Thomas Balogh whom *we* wanted to assist in the preparatory work..." (pp. 145-6); similarly, on the preparation for the independence constitution: "within a month of Independence *we* would introduce *our* own constitution" (p. 187). Feeling that his energies were restricted as an Attorney-General reforming the laws of Ghana, he resigned to give greater scope to them, to devote them to education and, in particular, to fashioning top institutions which would be "the forcing ground for a fundamentally different approach to the problems of mankind." Having discussed his plans with Nkrumah, the latter suggested (pp. 333-4) that he should take up one of the Presidential Professorships at the University! When, finally, he resigned as Attorney-General he set up his office in Flagstaff House, where Nkrumah lived and worked, and he dealt with "a wide variety of matters" or "a wide range of subjects" among which were: civil service organisation, methods of preventing corruption, international questions at the United Nations and the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, negotiations over cocoa, the "World Without the Bomb" Conference and Ghana's education system (pp. 338-9).

A Cagliostro or a technician?

In any event, Mr. Bing is in the company of those happy few who have a simple ideological clue to Nkrumah's Ghana and an even simpler explanation of the Coup that toppled Nkrumah's régime in February 1966. His account of Nkrumah's Ghana from 1950 to 1956 is typical of views held by many simple-minded ideologists.

According to Mr. Bing, Ghana at independence decided to set an example to the world

KWEKU FOLSON is a young African political scientist, who is at present at Christ's College, Cambridge. He was born in Ghana in 1974. He is writing a book on patterns of socialist thinking in Africa.

<sup>1</sup> *Reap The Whirlwind*, Macgibbon and Kee, 63s.

by following what he calls "a means of co-existence between the industrialised nations and the poorer states who comprise the great bulk of mankind." Because of this the country, which was economically and strategically of no particular importance, was endowed with great symbolic significance and "every figure who appeared on its stage was magnified and distorted almost beyond recognition." Although "crimes...on occasions, occurred"<sup>2</sup> and there were a few local weaknesses, the country was doing very well until the Coup. Great social and economic strides had been made, and the country had "ostentatiously dissociated itself from the world's ideological conflicts." (How anyone who lived in Ghana after 1960 can make, let alone subscribe to, such a statement, defies belief!) Yet Nkrumah's policies were intensely disliked by Western forces and were accordingly criticised and discredited in the Western press.

Partly, according to Bing, this was because "orthodox conservative opinion in the West" wanted to prove that Africans could not govern themselves. They badly needed this proof to provide a moral explanation, even justification, of the slave trade, Western exploitation and colonialism in Africa. Partly, also, the explana-

tion is that what Ghana was doing in those years constituted "a challenge to the Western system powerful enough to compel it to mount a sustained counter-offensive." But Mr. Bing is too enlightened to ascribe this almost unanimous Western hostility to Ghana to any conspiracy.<sup>3</sup> Essentially, according to Mr. Bing, this hostility was due to the fact that every attempt to implement the country's policy ran counter to one or other of those vested interests which inevitably grow up in the train of colonialism and necessarily survive it. It was these hostile forces which finally destroyed Nkrumah's government. As for Nkrumah himself, he knew all the faults of the country and (with the modest help of Mr. Bing) unfailingly prescribed the correct remedies for them. Unfortunately, no one man or institution in the country could match Nkrumah in his wisdom, hard-working habits, integrity and patriotism and, consequently, he was badly let down. Thus, the Civil Service was useless, trapped as it was in its colonial and Oxbridge strait-jacket. The judiciary was useless—what else could it be when it thought that the archaic laws of England constituted the *Visio Beatifica*? The University (of Ghana) was useless because instead of producing technically qualified people to solve the country's problems it produced only people with degrees in Ancient History, English Literature, or the Classics.<sup>4</sup> And the people of Ghana themselves were stupid—why else did they "quite uncritically" accept the results of the referendum of January, 1964, which were rigged by over-enthusiastic District Commissioners, the Civil Service and the Police, despite the democratic purity of Nkrumah and his party machine? All this is not a caricature of Mr. Bing's arguments. Ghanaian critics of Nkrumah's régime have heard such arguments propounded by Western ideological supporters of Nkrumah again and again.

<sup>2</sup> It is to be noted that Mr. Bing does not give any example in his narrative of such crimes.

<sup>3</sup> However, he claims later and at several points in his narrative that such a conspiracy (or several such conspiracies) in fact existed. After granting African countries independence, the Western world "almost immediately repented and stepped in to prevent them governing themselves" (p. 36). Later, he claims that the conspiracy took place even earlier. The British even *before* independence had decided to prepare the country for a phoney independence (pp. 279-81). Later still, he claims that the change of policy did not occur "almost immediately" after independence, but that the developed world cooperated with the African states for some time before changing their policy (p. 450). Consistency is not a virtue of Mr. Bing's book.

<sup>4</sup> This is not only untrue, but silly. The University had by 1961, when the foreign exchange crisis started, produced more graduates in Economics (the particular complaint of Mr. Bing) than in any other discipline apart from History. Only a handful of graduates were trained in Classics and Ancient History. The University of Ghana comes in for a lot of abuse from Mr. Bing; but surprisingly, he keeps silent over the abuses Nkrumah's press used to hurl at Dr. C. C. O'Brien, the Vice-Chancellor, whom Mr. Bing describes as a "man with progressive ideas" (p. 364). The truth is that the University of Ghana refused to kow-tow to the whims and caprices of Nkrumah, Bing, and their accomplices and to be taken in by their fanciful ideas.

IT HAS ALWAYS PUZZLED me, among many Ghanaian critics of Nkrumah, why apparently well-meaning Western left-wing defenders of Nkrumah's régime have closed their eyes to its appalling misdeeds and even crimes. A careful reading of Mr. Bing's book provides the answer. The ideological supporters of Nkrumah's régime are primarily interested not in Ghana, nor even in Nkrumah, but in Western society. They are, for various reasons, against capitalism and capitalists, against big combines and monopolists, against "bourgeois" trade unions and Universities, against Churches, against the American alliance, NATO, the Common Market, in sum, against "the Establishment" and its policies. It is these prejudices and hatreds which

determine what they support and despise in Ghanaian society. What, therefore, predisposes them to support Nkrumah is that he is thought to be against their enemies in the West, not because of his achievements for Ghanaians or Africans. Certainly, this approach to Ghana's problems comes up every now and again in Mr. Bing's narrative. At every turn in the narrative he is over-anxious to attack Western papers and authors, and to defend Nkrumah's record—and his own—against their criticisms. It is not, indeed, an exaggeration to say that that is the whole purpose of his book—and he himself says almost as much. The primary purpose of the book, according to Mr. Bing, is not to defend Nkrumah, his Ministers or his Party, nor even the author himself; his main purpose is to explain "the important lesson in its world context which Ghana provides."

It is important to emphasise this point if Ghanaians, and Africans generally, are to draw the right conclusions from Nkrumah's tragic failure. One very important reason why Nkrumah failed in Ghana, and was alienated not only from the "intellectuals" or the "élite" but, in the last years of his régime, from "the masses" as well, was that he relied too much on foreign political advisers, mostly left-wing dissidents at odds with their own societies. These people never understood Ghana. Mr. Bing pretends to great authority in Ghana, but his interpretation of various aspects of Ghanaian society is frequently faulty and his factual mistakes are glaring.

Thus it is simply nonsensical to say that the Aborigines Rights Protection Society were supporters of Indirect Rule (p. 45). It is equally nonsensical to include members of the National Liberation Council among the aristocratic class (p. 62), whatever that means in the Ghanaian

<sup>5</sup> Nkrumah corroborates this statement rather unexpectedly: "It pays no one to tamper with Ghanaian freedom and dignity" (Kwame Nkrumah, *Dark Days in Ghana* (Lawrence and Wishart, 1968, p. 29). Mr. Bing complains of his treatment after the Coup when he was arrested (p. 20). Many Ghanaians thought he was much luckier than the victims of Nkrumah's régime who languished in condemned cells for years until the Coup.

An authoritative study of the operation of the Preventive Detention Act is being made by Professor Adu Boahen and Mr. K. E. de Graft Johnson of the University of Ghana. Meanwhile glimpses of the cruelties perpetrated by the Nkrumah régime may be had from two reports containing extracts from evidence of witnesses at a Commission of Enquiry into Ghana Prisons: *Dr. J. B. Danquah, Detention and Death in Nsawam Prison* and *Mr. E. Obetsebi-Lamprey, Detention and Death in Nsawam Prison*, both published by the Ministry of Information, Accra.

context. Nobody in Ghana has ever believed that the Colonial legacy included "a completely efficient or a completely incorrupt police force" (p. 71). The Cocoa Marketing Board was certainly not an exploitative instrument foisted on the farmers by the Colonial Office (p. 90). The views on chieftaincy attributed to Akufo Addo and William Ofori Atta (p. 93) are in fact wrong and indicate Mr. Bing's basic ignorance of the political history of Ghana. Mr. Bing's account of how Nkrumah was called to the general secretaryship of the United Gold Coast Convention (p. 93) is, to say the least, fanciful. It is not true to say that Casely Hayford resigned office once "he was convinced that he was not a success" (p. 119). R. R. Amponsah was not a member of the Constitutional Commission appointed by the N.L.C. after the Coup (p. 240) nor were Busia, Dombo, and Joe Appiah, leaders of the Opposition to Nkrumah (pp. 266-67) etc., etc.

When Mr. Bing claims, *inter alia*, that Sir Arku Korsah was a link between the C.P.P. and the "old ruling families" (p. 311) he shows that he did not grasp the movement of opinion in Ghana. When he speaks repeatedly of the "aristocratic families," "the ruling families," or people from "royal families"; when he describes the C.P.P. as being "in its final analysis, a peasant party" (p. 122); when he claims that terms like "Marxists" and "non-denominational christianity" had a "revolutionary ring" in the ears of the farmers (pp. 124-25); when he declares that during the agitation over federation in Ghana the poorer farmers sided with the C.P.P. while the wealthy farmers lined up behind the chiefs (p. 158); when he refers to the "Zongos" as "the working-class quarters of (Ghana's) large towns" (p. 127) etc., etc., Mr. Bing shows his lack of understanding of Ghanaian society and himself a victim of the delusions of old-fashioned Western European class-conscious socialists.

This ignorance was partly due to the mystical belief in ideology which seemed to them to produce infallible solutions on *a priori* grounds, and partly to the fact that they did not understand any Ghanaian language, and without this could scarcely ever hope to understand Ghanaian society. Thus, the left-wing advisers' basically Euro-centric views were accentuated and Nkrumah was bombarded with advice and suggestions and prescriptions which alienated him further and further from Ghanaians. And as the policies based on their advice engendered more and more opposition, the totalitarian apparatus was given greater force. This went on until (to adapt Marx) the nationalist and freedom-loving Ghanaian society became incompatible with its foreign and totalitarian integument; the system burst asunder and the oppressors felt themselves oppressed, if temporarily.<sup>6</sup>



THE MOVEMENT FOR INDEPENDENCE never meant—and still does not mean—the physical expulsion of Europeans from the Continent of Africa or any part of it. But it meant and still does mean removing them from policy-making positions so that the indigenous people or their accredited representatives can gain full control over these positions. That is why sometimes the total number of Europeans in a colony, as in Ghana, can actually increase after independence. Once Africans are in the policy-making positions they realise that they need people with particular technical skills, doctors, engineers, managers and administrators, agriculturalists, sometimes even lawyers, if their development is to be rapid and effective. However, the ideological “advisers” of Nkrumah and other African leaders scarcely belong to this category of persons with particular technical skills; they are strictly men of “policy.” They seek to influence and direct the policy-making organs of the independent African countries. To the extent that they succeed in driving away independent-minded and educated Africans from the centre of decision-making they become the new colonialists, foreigners controlling the policy-making organs of African countries. Mr. Bing asks the question “Is there any way in which individuals with political experience in the developed countries can assist in serving the development of the less developed world?” If Africans mean to be masters in their own house, if they mean to pursue policies that are in tune with the freely expressed wishes and aspirations of the African “masses,” then the answer to this question must be an emphatic “No!”

ARE WE TOO CLOSE to the Nkrumah era in Ghana and Africa to be able to write a definitive and objective history of it? I am afraid that we cannot even assume too readily that this era is past. The best that can be done now is to ensure that all viewpoints are available for the future historian.

\* An example is *Africa and the World*, a review published in London, which has been carrying scurrilous attacks on post-Coup Ghana. The magazine was set up with Ghanaian public funds by Nkrumah, but it is completely under the control of an Englishman. See *Report of the Commission of Enquiry on the Commercial Activities of the Erstwhile Publicity Secretariat*. (Ghana Information Services, Accra, 1967). Par. 86–98 and 185–186. See also *Nkrumah's Deception of Africa* (Ghana Information Service, Accra, 1966) ch. XII.

I would not wish to deny that Nkrumah had solid achievements to his credit. The ideals he preached, if through sheer percussive propaganda, have had an impact on the minds of Ghanaians, especially the younger ones. “Social justice,” “Pan-African unity,” “anti-colonialism” and “positive neutrality”; the insistence that social services like education and health services should be made available to all; that in the affairs of the state the “poorest he” counts as much as the “richest he”; that it is a worthwhile, indeed an urgent, object of public policy to bring all African countries under one effective government; and that material aid ought to be given by independent countries in Africa to those Africans still fighting against colonialism and minority domination in Southern Africa—these, among others, are part of every Ghanaian’s mental equipment nowadays. Indeed, judged by these very standards, Nkrumah had failed so miserably by 1966 that Ghanaians of all classes in that year of liberation could not help but rejoice enthusiastically at his downfall. In the practical field, too, Nkrumah’s achievements are undeniable. During the fifteen years of his reign, communications, especially roads and harbours, were improved; social services were extended; new industries were established; the gap between the North (largely neglected in the colonial era) and the rest of the country was narrowed; the country was, by and large, united; and the political consciousness of the average Ghanaian was raised.

However, anyone who knows anything about the history of Ghana before Nkrumah’s rule cannot be impressed by the exaggerations with which his achievements are held out to the outside world and the rest of Africa by his ideological admirers on the Left and also by his professional propagandists.<sup>6</sup> Lofty ideals in politics and public life, including those of “Pan-Africanism” and the need to uphold the dignity of the African, have been commonplace in Ghana for at least a century. When a Ghanaian thinks of the proud cultures of the various ethnic groups making up Ghana today, and of such distinguished public figures as Mensah Sarbah, Attah Ahuma, Casely Hayford, James Kwegyir Aggrey, the leaders of the Fanti Confederacy, Nana Sir Ofori Atta I, Dr. Danquah, *et al.*, he cannot help feeling hurt when non-Ghanaians talk and write as if Ghana was a collection of lost peoples without a history, without culture, and without a tradition of public service until Nkrumah appeared on the scene—as if Nkrumah was to Ghana what Newton was said to be to Science:

*Ghana and Ghana's people lay hid in Night;  
God said "Let Nkrumah be" and all was Light.*

Nor can one wax ecstatic over Nkrumah's practical achievements because he had fifteen years to unfold the genius to which he so immoderately laid claim: after all the country never lacked adequate economic resources to support its development. The colonial era, despite its acute shortcomings and its basically objectionable character, was not the stagnant era of waste that the latter-day *simplificateurs* would have us believe. Even during the colonial era Ghana, then the Gold Coast, was already ahead of all other colonies in tropical Africa (including the Belgian Congo and the Rhodesias, if one considers only the Africans and excludes the over-privileged and pampered white minorities). That is why one Governor of the Gold Coast, Sir Alan Burns, could describe the country in 1947 as "the model colony," and is, indeed, the basic reason why the Gold Coast was the first colony in Black Tropical Africa to become independent.

The question, then, is not what Nkrumah achieved, but what he *could* have achieved with the time and resources at his disposal.

I SHOULD LIKE to isolate five specific factors which engendered much opposition to Nkrumah, especially in educated Ghanaian circles, in spite of his achievements:

1. **IRRATIONALITY.** Nkrumah's régime was utterly irrational in its approach to problems. The independence movement thrived on intense emotionalism and consequently it threw up people whose only qualification for leadership was the ability to arouse passions. These people in fact depended on excitement for the sustenance of their support, and

<sup>7</sup> In Parliament Nkrumah was a pathetic figure. His speeches were incoherent and the cut and thrust of debate was utterly beyond him. But he came alive when he addressed crowds at party rallies or when he addressed such bodies as Freedom Fighters' conferences where emotional symbols could be manipulated with complete freedom.

<sup>8</sup> Mr. Bing treats Nkrumah's exploitation of religion with indulgence. It would appear that Mr. Bing himself caught a little of the air of superstition which surrounded Nkrumah. He harps a lot on "shrines" and "juju." Close association between the Army and shrines facilitated the organisation of the Coup, according to Mr. Bing. And the Asantehene's membership of the Society of Freemasons is interpreted in terms of "juju" and shrines (pp. 124-133). Or is he merely measuring up to what is expected of Africa?

Nkrumah himself desperately needed it in order to bolster up his "charismatic" appeal. Indeed, it was only when he was in an emotional mood that he felt politically at ease.<sup>7</sup> He therefore found it essential to generate an atmosphere of burning intensity. That is why he exploited religious forms so much.<sup>8</sup> Such an atmosphere, however, put intelligence and reason at a discount. It put a premium on quackery and charlatanism. Critics who insisted on applying rational canons to problems became "enemies of the people" because they were, indirectly, undermining the *Osagyefo's* position. This partly explains some of the paradoxes of Nkrumah's régime. His obvious preference for corrupt and semi-literate *yes-men* was not exactly calculated to realise his publicly proclaimed aims. The manner in which decisions involving the expenditure of millions of pounds of public money were sometimes taken was simply irresponsible, even frivolous. And the uses to which public funds were sometimes put were incompatible with the proclaimed objective of rapid economic development.

Mr. Bing himself cites good examples of irrational decisions—although he seems to admire them. Ghana's purchase of VC-10 aircraft was justified; only "what was lacking was diplomatic negotiation of landing rights, the scientific prospecting of new routes and technical planning generally" (p. 398). The whole of the Ghana Airways enterprise was well conceived; only "all that was missing was the staff able to work out in detail the complicated arrangements necessary to make it work." Indeed, "often an opportunity was opened up but somewhere along the line the specialist, the administrator, the technician or even the typist needed to despatch the letter was missing and the project came to nothing in consequence." It does not occur to Mr. Bing that what he is defending is a magnificent formula for throwing away millions of pounds of real money.

Those who dared to criticise were dubbed "imperialist stooges," "reactionary intellectuals" guilty of the crime of possessing an "Oxbridge mentality," "neo-colonialist stooges," or worse. Yet how, without adopting severely rational methods, can we ever hope (in Nkrumah's words) "to accomplish in a single generation what it has taken developed nations 300 years or more to achieve"?

2. **CORRUPTION.** Corruption was not brought into Ghana by Nkrumah and his Convention People's Party (C.P.P.), nor has it disappeared from the country's political scene. One cannot even hope that it will ever disappear

completely. All that could legitimately be asked of Nkrumah was that he should take steps to reduce its incidence in the society. But this never happened. Indeed it was obvious that he preferred to work with corrupt politicians. Persons who were condemned as corrupt by Commissions of Enquiry set up by the government itself received promotions or were merely transferred to other posts.<sup>9</sup> Reports of Commissions of Enquiry were doctored by the government before publication<sup>10</sup> in order to shield Nkrumah's henchmen. It was widely believed that cuts on contracts and purchases of ships, planes and locomotives were taken by his Ministers and some Senior Civil Servants.<sup>11</sup> The Cocoa Purchasing Company and, after it, the United Farmers Co-operative Council, set up to help the farmers, were engaged in systematically defrauding the farmers.<sup>12</sup> Vast sums of money en-

trusted to party hacks and dubious characters for subversive work in other African countries were known to be diverted into private pockets.

Rather than check these practices Nkrumah turned them to his personal advantage—by using the evidence of corruption to blackmail those guilty into intensifying their personal support for him. So utterly dependent did his corrupt henchmen thus become that a very powerful reason for upholding his position at all costs and by any means was their simple desire to stay out of jail. Nkrumah himself was also believed to be personally corrupt. In launching the Seven-Year Development Plan in March 1964, Nkrumah appealed to his countrymen to repatriate their foreign capital back home. His own parliamentary supporters openly laughed at him. After his departure from Parliament House one of them whispered in a Ghanaian language, in a tone distinct enough to be heard in the gallery, that "he should first repatriate his..." But the evidence of the extent of his corruption that has come out since the Coup has surprised even his severest critics in Ghana.

Nkrumah's supporters have poohpoohed accusations of corruption against their hero on various grounds. One is that he did not distinguish between his private pocket and public coffers, "like an African chief." But still, under Nkrumah, humble public servants were jailed for failing to make this very elementary and healthy distinction. Another ground is that in his will Nkrumah gave everything to the State. Does this mean that the right to purloin from the public chest on condition that the remainder of what is purloined will be handed back to the state on one's death-bed should be conceded to every public official? A last ground is that in every developing country and, indeed, in every political system there is corruption. And does this mean that since in every society there are common burglars, no one need complain about burglary? In any case, Nkrumah is accused not of political corruption but of personal corruption having nothing to do with politics (e.g., dishing out public funds to jujumen and numerous paramours). It is important that Africans should not be taken in by "theories of corruption" in developing countries because in our economic conditions the type of corruption we have experienced is a fundamental factor in retarding economic development. Mr. Bing's indulgent attitude to corruption in Ghanaian society can only be viewed by a Ghanaian with utter dismay. A Minister's wife buys a real golden bed (a purchase that was headline-news at the time it occurred). Mr. Bing sees in this only the Minister's retort to the Ashanti Golden Stool, and he adds insult to injury by describing the Minister as "a sincere egalitarian..."

<sup>9</sup> Two famous examples may be cited. Mr. Krobo Edusei was condemned in 1954 when he was a junior minister by a Commission of Enquiry headed by Sir Arku Korsah (the most senior of the Ghanaian judges and soon to become Chief Justice) as unfit to hold public office. In spite of this, he rose to Cabinet rank and later became Minister of Interior responsible for administering the Preventive Detention Act. Mr. Bing, understandably, makes no reference to this aspect of Mr. Krobo Edusei's history. Mr. Djin was first dismissed from public office in 1956 as a result of censure by a Commission of Enquiry, an action which Mr. Bing describes as "justified" (p. 179). He, however, forgets to add that Mr. Djin later rose to become ambassador to the Congo and a Cabinet Minister and to be condemned (again) by another Commission of Enquiry!

<sup>10</sup> Examples are the *Report of Commission of Enquiry into alleged Irregularities and Malpractices in connection with the Issue of Import Licences* (1964) (The "Akainya Report") and *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Trade Malpractices in Ghana*. (The "Abraham Report"). Chapter 3 of the *Akainya Report* was omitted from the published version, but the government forgot to re-number the chapters. Mr. Bing passes over the histories of these Commissions in meaningful silence.

<sup>11</sup> These suspicions and rumours have been amply substantiated since the Coup. See *Report of the Commission to enquire into Kwame Nkrumah Properties*; *Report of the Commission to enquire into the Affairs of Nadeco Limited* and *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Irregularities and Malpractices in the Grant of Import Licences* (1967) (The "Ollennu Report") all published by the Ministry of Information, Accra, 1966-7.

<sup>12</sup> See *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the affairs of the Cocoa Purchasing Company Limited* (1956) and *Report of the Committee of Enquiry on the Local Purchasing of Cocoa* (Ministry of Information, Accra).

liberty, equality and fraternity summed up his political philosophy."<sup>13</sup>

3. **DICTATORSHIP.** It is not at all clear why Nkrumah's supporters (communists apart) deny that his system of government, at any rate since 1960, was dictatorial. To those Africans who lived in fear of the midnight knock on the door; to those whose breadwinners could vanish overnight; to those who could lose their livelihood and their jobs at the *diktat* of the *Osagyefo* (or even of a District Commissioner); to those whose property could be seized, not through any due process of law, but by the mere command of the "boss"; to those who were systematically spied upon, and to those university lecturers whose lectures were constantly "reported"; to those who suffered the paralytic effect of the Preventive Detention Act—the régime was clearly and unmistakably

<sup>13</sup> Mr. Bing's account of how the commission into the affairs of the Cocoa Purchasing Company came to be set up is to say the least, curious (pp.170-2). His treatment of the Savundra case (in Ghana) is strange. But his treatment of Nkrumah's corruption is astonishing (pp. 401-4). He ignores solid proof that has come out since the Coup and refuses to deal with numerous scandalous deals; he battles, as usual, with the British press and even draws invidious comparisons with royalty in Europe and the Middle East in an attempt to cover up his hero's corruption. In this exercise he is sometimes reckless. He claims, for example, that commissions of Inquiry established since the Coup have confirmed that Nkrumah transferred no money outside and that no one had come forward to prove that Nkrumah had a large fortune in Ghana (p. 404).

Unfortunately for Mr. Bing, these very points have been specifically established by the *Report of the Commission to Enquire into the Kwame Nkrumah Properties* (1966), especially par. 110, 336, 496 and 497.

<sup>14</sup> See the Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1965 (Act 290), and the Presidential Elections Act, 1965 (Act 292), section 4 (b)-(d).

<sup>15</sup> His paranoiac tendencies were helped along by several persons, both Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian. Mr. Bing's whole narrative is an eloquent testimony to his own personal contribution. M. Habib Niang, a Senegalese pseudo-intellectual, once claimed in a talk at the University of Ghana that Nkrumah was "the world's first real political philosopher," better than Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Rousseau, Locke, *et al.*, "all put together." A Cabinet Minister, also in a speech at the University of Ghana not long before the Coup, compared Nkrumah to Christ. (He was one of the first people to denounce Nkrumah after his downfall.)

<sup>16</sup> See *Report of the Commission of Enquiry on the Commercial Activities of the Erstwhile Publicity Secretariat* (Ministry of Information, Accra), esp. paras. 1-12 and 82-132.

dictatorial. And the dictatorship was no less real to those pathetic followers of Nkrumah (Ministers, members of the Central Committee of "the Party," M.P.s, Special Advisers and Party officials) who moaned in private and praised in public; they gathered enough courage to criticise the "Old Man" in his absence, but trembled in his presence.

The Republican Constitution of 1960 elevated the President above Parliament, and subsequent amendments increased further the concentration of power in his own hands. (The last one in fact decreed that no one could be nominated for the Presidency unless he was a member of the C.P.P. and his nomination approved by Nkrumah!<sup>14</sup>) He sought to bring all institutions under the party, which had itself degenerated into his personal machine. The only two important institutions he had not succeeded in capturing by the time of the Coup were the churches and the universities. But by that time he had usurped the power (contrary to the law passed by his own Parliament and approved by himself) to appoint the Vice-Chancellors; and he also claimed, unsuccessfully (thanks to the resistance of Dr. O'Brien), the power to direct the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana to appoint his Party men Professors. The "Central Committee of the C.P.P.," in whose name important decisions (*i.e.*, dismissing M.P.s from Parliament) were often announced, did not in practice exist; and the M.P.s dared not criticise the *Osagyefo*, the Government, or "the Party." The whole authoritarian farce was finally unmasked when (in 1965) a whole Parliament of 198 members was hand-picked by "the Central Committee" and returned "unopposed"!

4. **MEGALOMANIA.** This was the most abiding quality of the man.<sup>15</sup> This helps to explain a lot of what I have already described. Irrationalism, corruption, and dictatorship were all anchored in Nkrumah's megalomania. What was called opposition to Nkrumah often consisted only in a firm refusal to join in exacerbating the disease. There was no place one could not get by singing the man's praises, no corruption one could not get away with through adulation. There were always doubts about the authorship of his books, but he never acknowledged his debts to his ghost writers or even to his research assistants. He announced on the radio that he was not "the maker but the instrument of history" and that he was "the conscience of the nation." The whole public relations apparatus of the government, both internal and external, was geared to building him up as the indispensable leader of Ghana and Africa<sup>16</sup> and his African policy was constructed

on that assumption. So "Freedom Fighters" did not only come to Ghana, but had to be fêted; they did not only travel about on Ghana's ticket, but had to do so *de luxe*; they did not only have to be accommodated in New York at Ghana's expense, but in first-class hotels. No wonder many of them could never go back to their countries as real "Freedom Fighters." The truth is that Nkrumah was systematically bribing them with Ghana's money so that they would support him for the leadership of Africa. Those who refused to be hoodwinked in this way were given short shrift. For his megalomania alone, if not for anything else, Nkrumah had to be removed if the country were ever to return to a path of sober progress.

5. **MISMANAGEMENT.** How could an economy survive the combined effect of so much unreason, so much corruption, so cruel a dictatorship and so wild-eyed a leader? Much has been made of the drop in the world price of cocoa, but Nkrumah cannot be blamed for that. What he was and should be justifiably blamed for was the alarming way in which he managed the economy, for he managed it as if the country had such abundant resources that waste did not matter. By the time of the Coup the cumulative losses of state enterprises were in the region of £15 million (money still had to be found to pay the credits with which they

were originally set up). In 1965 when the price of cocoa reached its lowest point since World War II, Nkrumah (without reference to anybody) decided to put up, solely for the Organisation of African Unity conference in Accra that year, a vast complex of buildings costing £10 million.<sup>17</sup> Dubious contracts involving several tens of millions of pounds were signed with businessmen of equally dubious character. Contracts were signed with East European countries which enabled them to fob off on Ghana second-hand machinery (repainted as new) and extremely shoddy consumer goods. More than £3 million were spent on an 18-mile stretch of prestige motor-way near the capital—in an economy crying for countryside feeder-roads. The pattern of the government's expenditure showed no signs of reflecting the crisis in the besieged economy. He claimed (so it was said) that no country had ever been taken to court for indebtedness! (Even this was not true: cf. the history of Liberia.) It was too much to ask the country to believe that the drop in cocoa price was responsible for the shortages in consumer-goods like car spares, raw materials, books, etc., while millions of pounds were being wasted. The economy's disease was *white-elephantiasis*. No wonder the standard of living of Ghanaians actually decreased during the latter years of Nkrumah's rule.<sup>18</sup> Relief just had to come.

<sup>17</sup> Mr. Bing argues that the conference buildings would (by offering facilities for international conferences) have provided a good basis for the tourist trade in Ghana. As he knows only too well, no examination of such a policy was ever made before millions of pounds were committed. In any case all attempts since the Coup to use the buildings for that very purpose have failed. A look at the main building—a veritable prison-house of sixty super-luxury flats—will quickly remind any observer of its original purpose: to provide accommodation of maximum security for the Heads of States and Governments attending the O.A.U. conference in Accra in 1965.

The truth of the matter is that Nkrumah hoped to entice the conference to base the permanent headquarters of the O.A.U. in Accra. Needless to say, the Heads of States and Government scented the bait and immediately decided to select Addis Ababa as the permanent headquarters.

<sup>18</sup> Mr. Bing seeks to give the impression that all attempts to get an economic adviser of stature before Independence were deliberately frustrated by the Colonial Office (pp. 145-47). But he quietly passes over the fact that later the government obtained the services of no less an economist than Professor Arthur Lewis. The fact that Mr. Bing nowhere in his narrative so much as mentions his name shows how untrustworthy his account basically is.

NKRUMAH's supporters have gone through many a mental gyration to prove, on no evidence at all, that Ghana's Coup on 24 February 1966 was organised by outside forces, especially the American C.I.A.

The most unreliable section of Mr. Bing's book is that dealing with the Coup and conditions in Ghana after it. He tries by all kinds of ingenious arguments to blame the U.S.A., the United Kingdom, France, West Germany, and Israel. Every type of circumstantial evidence is dragged in without avail, and he is finally forced to resort to "the type of analysis the fictional detective generally is portrayed as using..." (p. 435). The only solid conclusion he arrives at is that "it is impossible to say more than there is a *prima-facie* case that the C.I.A. may have had a hand in the plot" (p. 433). Yet by the end of the book Mr. Bing is claiming positively that the "revolt" was "no doubt" provoked by "direct" Western "intervention in Ghanaian internal affairs" (p. 449). To go one better, he also implies that the Opposition "engineered" the Coup (p. 306) and, again, that the Coup was all a tribal conspiracy by Ewes (p. 427). Incidentally, Mr. Bing's own

star witness, Kwame Nkrumah, can bring forward no evidence either in support of the thesis, which he also naturally upholds, that the Coup was the work of outside forces:

In Ghana the embassies of the United States, Britain and Germany were all implicated in the plot to overthrow my government. It is alleged that the U.S. Ambassador Franklin Williams offered the traitors 13 million dollars to carry out a *coup d'état*. Afrifa, Harlley and Kotoka were to get a large share of this if they would assassinate me at Accra Airport as I prepared to leave for Hanoi. I understand Afrifa said: "I think I will fail" and declined the offer. So apparently did the others... (*Dark Days in Ghana*, p. 49).

Nkrumah sees better evidence of foreign intervention in the depressed world cocoa price in 1965. According to him, the U.S.A. and Britain forced down the price of cocoa as "part of their policy of preparing the economic ground for political action in the form of a 'coup' and a change of government" (p. 95). So no sooner had the Coup taken place than "the price of cocoa suddenly rose on the world market." However, Mr. Bing has to admit that the price of cocoa started picking up *before* the Coup and that by the time of the Coup it had reached £177 per ton.

Mr. Bing's ideas about post-Coup conditions in Ghana are built on exaggerations and half-truths. He paints a gloomy picture of the economy, happily forgetting to add that this was the inevitable and direct result of Nkrumah's economic recklessness. He harps on the alleged lack of press freedom in Ghana. But a glance at the press in post-Coup Ghana will show two startling differences from the Nkrumah era. (1) While full press freedom

has by no means been achieved the state-owned press is much, much freer than it ever was under Nkrumah. (2) Since the Coup, the *Pioneer* (an Opposition paper suppressed by Nkrumah's régime) has been resurrected and has been highly critical of the N.L.C.; and there has been established at the University of Ghana a new bi-monthly, the *Legon Observer*, which is independent and has been saying things which no newspaper could dare say under the Nkrumah régime. Mr. Bing fails to mention these papers. He claims that the N.L.C. régime is "naked police and army rule." To any unprejudiced observer the present régime in Ghana is liberalism itself compared with the Nkrumah régime. Mr. Bing claims that the reorganisation of the courts was a "purge of judges who had ruled against them in *habeas corpus* proceedings and the like" (p. 415). If he can believe this he can believe anything (and he does).

It is futile to argue with such minds. For their conclusions are embedded in their premises: by definition Nkrumah could only be overthrown by the Devil and his collaborators. The proper question for Ghanaians—and for Africans generally—is a solemn one, and one that should lead to reflection and self-criticism. Why is it that an African leader, who started off with immense popular support, appeared so well-meaning and was looked to by the whole of Africa for leadership, should in the end have been rejected by his own people? Why, in fact, should his own people have rejoiced with such uninhibited ecstasy at his overthrow?

In the failure of Nkrumah lies a Ghanaian tragedy. In the failure of Africans to learn the true lessons from his downfall will lie an African tragedy.

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## NOTES & TOPICS

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### The Price of Nihilism

DR. E. J. MISHAN'S [ENCOUNTER, March 1969] thoughts on university reform are headlined as "heretical." This is, of course, too modest. There is nothing "heretical" about them. Academic economists everywhere are propounding these prescriptions for the proper financing of universities, so that they will be freer from the pressure of state money, and for the proper financing of students, so that they (and their parents) will be freer to choose what they want, and do not want, to study.

Nobody sketched the baselines of an economic approach better than Dr. Mishan's colleague Professor Harry Johnson, in his inaugural lecture at the London School of Economics in October 1967.<sup>1</sup>

Taking the troubles at L.S.E. as one of his clinical examples of the proper economic approach to social questions, Professor Johnson stated a series of propositions. The first was the fact of "the general democratisation of higher education," largely or entirely financed through government. The consequence of this, he argued, since it was no longer the old and recognised *élite* that was being educated, was that "the teachers ask themselves whether they are getting money for their value, and the taught ask themselves whether they are getting value for their (or their society's) money."

Cut off from the old Oxbridge esteem, and asked to work in London or elsewhere for less than they could get in other bureaucratic occupations, the dons "have on the average reduced the amount of work they have been willing or accustomed to provide in exchange for their salaries, in order to make up the difference by outside earnings." Marginally, therefore, the standards of appointment to academic jobs have been lowered to bring in men and women willing to do the job of teaching the new non-*élite*.

The core of complaint by those students who still wish to be taught and examined in the established fashion is thus given, quite unemotionally, its justification. This characteristically precise argument by Professor Johnson is only

put a bit askew because the present wish of many dissident students—and not necessarily anarchic or nihilistic ones—is not at all to be taught according to the conventional canon, and assumptions, of the old Oxbridge *élite*. What they want is that the right sort of teachers should be available for the new sort, as they see it, of teacher/taught dialogue. What has happened to them is that the gap between them and their teachers, between teachers and taught, has widened, not just for economic reasons but for ideological ones as well. They mean something different by "democratisation."

The particular points of Professor Johnson's economic analysis, latched directly on to the L.S.E.'s own recent troubles, went straighter to the point. The School, sitting prescriptively on a narrow near-City London site that is "an increasingly uneconomic location for the pursuit of undergraduate education," can offer only overcrowding and congestion to both students and staff. The "impact of this pressure of the laws of rent" means that there is an incentive for staff to minimise their time spent within the School, and for students to maximise the time they spend, in crowds, there. The perilous gap, and the frustration of student/staff expectations, are widened physically.

DR. MISHAN IS NOT concerned, overtly, with the peculiar circumstances of L.S.E. He is concerned with the "general democratisation of higher education," and its generally ill effects, economically, educationally and politically. Traditionally, Professor Johnson argued, higher education has derived its value from the means of entry it has given to a national, and limited, *élite*. Now, with the growth of higher education, financed by the rest of society, there is no guarantee of entry to whatever *élite* society may still retain. Indeed, with the old Oxbridge-style gates to the old places of influence, if not power, cut down, there is no obvious reason, Dr. Mishan argues, why State aid to higher or further education should give its preference to the now pseudo-*élite* of the present enlarged regiment of 200,000 university students. Why these who have managed to get university places, and not the others who have not? Dr. Mishan suggests a lot of cost/benefit sums, both in terms of individual students and in terms of society's gains and losses, to bolster his view that the money might be better spent, both individually and socially. He does not exactly prove anything.

It might look as if Dr. Mishan believed in an even wider "democratisation of higher education" than Professor Johnson was talking about. But this is not really his point, as I try to

<sup>1</sup> Harry Johnson, "The Economic Approach to Social Questions," *Economica* (London), February 1968.



understand it. I take his point to be, ideologically as well as economically, that the size and nature, the direction and location of our higher, and especially our university, education ought to be determined by consumer's choice, by the choice of students and parents, not by the man in Whitehall, or even by the consensus of dons and Treasury officials in the University Grants Committee. He says, in effect, that the calculations of the costs and benefits of university education in the national investment programme by administrative means is arbitrary, uneconomic and politically perilous—because students taken in on the state payroll, after the central sums have been done, expect (in Professor Johnson's words) "to receive more care and attention than the Government is prepared to pay for."

So Dr. Mishan belongs to the latter-day conventionally wise men, not only Colin Clark and Max Beloff, but Professor A. R. Crick and Professor Wiseman, and Professors Alan T. Peacock and Anthony J. Culyer.<sup>2</sup> What they all rather startlingly assume is that if we get the economics of universities right, as we ought to do, the political troubles will thus be dispersed; in this, they are, all of them, as Marxist as the Marxists (or the Marcusians) are. Let us, says Dr. Mishan, fully cost a university place—at, say, £1,000 not just £70 tuition fees plus an average of £250 for maintenance. Yes, indeed. That is surely as right and as sensible for university places as for transport seats. Let us then charge this full cost directly to the student, and so finance all the universities by fees not direct grants to universities. Let us, preferably, where needed, not meet students' fees from grants, whether central or local, but by loans, since by comparison with their fellows their entry to university is a privilege not a deserved right.

**T**HERE IS NOTHING to tear society apart in these "heresies." To count the real cost of university places is ordinary sense. To multiply the revenue of universities from students' fees, so as to meet the cost of their places—whether reimbursed or not from grants or loans—ought to add to the independent ability of the universities to spend their money as they will. But suddenly to turn all the present fictitiously small fees and grants into trebled or quadrupled full-cost fees or loans instead could be intolerably disruptive—as well as being inefficient. The present system of five-yearly current and capital grants from the Treasury to the universities through the University Grants Committee may indeed lean too heavily to-

<sup>2</sup> *Economic Aspects of Student Unrest*. The Institute of Economic Affairs, 3s. 6d.

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wards public decision and patronage. But suddenly to put this whole allocation of resources out into this imperfect market, with the bidding and bartering of parents and students in place of that admittedly insensitive central computer, could be both chaotic and inequitable. Fire after frying-pan, with smaller chance even than now (when the risk is a Minister's nod) of planning a proper programme, even for five years, for a university's provision. Surely any new programme has got to marry the old provisions with the new pricing, by the right blend of university grants and student fees.

The reformers are admittedly not just offering a better economic recipe. They all think, with different emphasis, that this is going to cure student unrest and dissatisfaction as well. Why do they think this? Do they think that, if they charge fully-costed fees, and give loans not grants, this will either reduce the number of takers or else bring in "a better class" of student, more docile and less likely to buck the line? I think not. Or do they think, as Professor Johnson would presumably argue, that in a university run on properly economic principles the provision for students as well as staff would so fall out that both would have that much less to complain about—and that much more to benefit from?

This is far from clear from the literature so far. One point they do make is that a freer university, with freer finance, would be freer to expel dissentients. This, I still believe, thinking of L.S.E., is a matter much more of law than of economics. And would fees and loans instead of grants make students more extrudable? The more positive point, that Professors Peacock and Culyer underline, is that with freer universities, freer to diversify their provisions, the non-conformist students might perhaps go more readily to places of their own choice instead of simply coming to wreck others.

I PUT MOST STORE MYSELF by the need for, and the worth of, more freedom of choice both for universities and for students. But I stay unconvinced that proper pricing is the panacea for all present discontents. However the financing of universities and of students may be sensibly re-jigged, to widen the choice of both, the amount of public money going somehow into the system will remain very large, and grow larger: or else the whole new university set-up—one of this country's only two achievements since the war—will simply, and disastrously, collapse. And, in so far as this whole ploy of "denationalising" university finance is intended to scotch the "student revolt," it just won't

# John O'HARA

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work. Get them all paying full fees, give them loans instead of grants, and you will still have the same *reformers*, the same *anarchists*, and the same *nihilists* among them.

It is quite true that if you put your universities on a proper footing, with proper costing, proper pricing, and proper remuneration (*à la* Professor Johnson), you might then be better able to meet student demands. Certainly you can meet those of the reformers, and some of those of the simple anarchists in a free community.<sup>1</sup> But you will still not be able to meet the destructive demands of the nihilists, who do not want universities to work but only, through violent confrontation and intimidation, to break down.

I do not think you can cost or price the nihilists out of the universities. And I do think that if you pretend to be liberating the universities while in fact intending to purge them, you are playing into the hands of those who talk conspiratorially about the toils of "monopoly

capitalism." I applaud the attempt to put the universities on an economic footing. But I believe here, as everywhere else, in the primacy of politics.

No university, however costed or priced, however tied to or freed from public money, can survive as a university with a nihilist element large enough to call the tune. Every university has much room for changes in constitution, curriculum, and character to meet the calls of reformers and even, as I think, of anarchists. But every one, to exist, has to be able to rebut and repudiate its nihilists—and that is a task, not for the price mechanism, not for the hidden hand, but for the continuing members of each university community, which means its own academic staff. It is a responsibility that they cannot dodge or argue away. It is not enough to count the real costs of their business; they have to stand up to be counted themselves as well—against those who want to paralyse the universities, not to liberate them at all.

Donald Tyerman

## Nietzsche as Scapegoat

*A Reply to Alasdair MacIntyre — By WALTER KAUFMANN*

IT is difficult to know with Professor MacIntyre's "Philosophy and Sanity: Nietzsche's Titanism" [ENCOUNTER, April] where to begin or how to get hold of a thesis that could be discussed fruitfully. At the outset the question is asked, half playfully, whether Nietzsche's insanity was somehow "the outcome of thinking Nietzsche's thought"; and in the end we get an affirmative answer, qualified with a "perhaps." In between no evidence *pro* or *con* is considered, and Nietzsche's medical history is ignored. From an ordinary journalist one might expect no more, but when prominent philosophers and sociologists write in this vein we must enquire *why* they do. What makes so many serious writers publish pieces of this sort?

Before we try to find an answer, let us take a quick look at the essay. In the second paragraph it is suggested that Nietzsche's "life is relevant to the understanding of his philosophy"; but nothing at all is said in support of this claim, and Nietzsche's life is ignored in what follows. Apparently the point was merely to establish that Nietzsche's notes (and specifically those in *The Will to Power*) are of

"special interest." This conclusion is a commonplace, but the reason given for it is a bit odd.

If the "interest" were really mainly biographical, then each note should be considered in the context of Nietzsche's development and compared with what he said in his books. My edition of *The Will to Power* makes it easy to do this, but this is not the path taken in "Philosophy and Sanity." MacIntyre quotes from a single note that happens to antedate most of Nietzsche's major works and calls it, without giving any reasons for this curious claim, "the foundation of Nietzsche's doctrine." *Doctrine* here seems to refer to Nietzsche's whole philosophy, but after that quotation we lose all contact with Nietzsche's writings. The reader may well wonder whether the evidence for all that follows comes from Nietzsche's books or from hasty notes—or rather from the author's vague recollections.

Three paragraphs from the end we are suddenly brought up short: "If my argument is correct, then. . . ." But the "then" clause is palpably false. (That the "vulgarity" here attributed to Nietzsche's concept of the *Übermensch* (overman) depends on crude misunderstandings I have tried to show in detail in my *Nietzsche*,<sup>1</sup> and it would be tedious to repeat the demonstration here.) Hence it appears that the "argument" is *not* correct.

<sup>1</sup> *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (1950); 3rd ed., rev. and enlarged, Princeton University Press, and Random House Vintage Books (1968).

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But here I am scoring a debater's point. The crass misrepresentation of Nietzsche's concept of the *Übermensch* is not at all entailed by the preceding pages, and hence its untenability does not *prove* the preceding argument wrong. In fact, we are not offered anything that closely resembles an argument; we are much closer to a stream of consciousness. Hence it may be inappropriate to offer any comments; one does not prick soap bubbles with a sword.

WHAT WAS SAID of Spinoza almost two hundred years ago, is true of Nietzsche: people have been treating him like a dead dog. Again and again, highly respected professors have written with pity or contempt of Nietzsche's madness, his irrationality, his unscholarly excesses, or his "intellectual responsibility for making the ideological task of the Nazis easier," while the very essays in which these sentiments were voiced showed exceedingly little regard for scholarship or rational argument or the "intellectual responsibility" that the writers of such essays might incur.

MacIntyre's article on "Nietzsche's Titanism" considers it crucial "that an argument as subtle and sophisticated as Nietzsche's does issue in such vulgarity" and "that a mind as splendid as Nietzsche's should reach so banal a conclusion"; and this is held to be "perhaps a further sign that it was the dilemma of a whole culture and not merely a private problem." But if the vulgarity and the banal conclusion cannot be attributed to Nietzsche; if they must be charged to his interpreters—what becomes of the dilemma of a whole culture? For the idiosyncrasies of this or that interpreter are of no concern to me, and I have no wish to subject them to the sort of speculation that they are so fond of lavishing on Nietzsche. But what *is* wrong with a culture that keeps producing such essays?

Sometimes interpreters of this type bring to mind painters of former centuries who included in their pictures small self-portraits that most viewers did not recognise as such. The difference is, of course, that these interpreters fail to recognise their own self-portraits. The psychological term for this is "projection"; and speaking in religious terms, it seems almost like a form of penance. But it has no purgative power until it ceases to be unconscious. Since Socrates and Plato the idea of the philosopher as a physician is familiar. One of the functions of a philosopher may well be to raise the unconscious into consciousness, not merely for the individual but for a whole culture.

Misinterpretations of a man's philosophy must first of all be refuted in detail. That is a task that cannot be eschewed by taking refuge

in psychology or sociology. The texts come first. But once this task is accomplished, it would be rather unhumorous to keep repeating oneself when misinterpretations persist. Eventually it becomes reasonable to ask *why* they persist—not among those who do not read scholarly books but among professors who write books and articles and reviews.

ENDLESS MISINTERPRETATIONS are the price of immortality. This is almost a tautology because what we mean by calling a book, an *oeuvre*, or a man immortal is that they keep being interpreted; and the more is written about them, the more misinterpretations we get. But my epigram also points to a psychological phenomenon. Misinterpretations often represent the revenge of the small against the great; they are the price that mortals exact for immortality.

By becoming immortal a man breaks the bounds set for his fellow men as surely as if he had committed a crime; hence he may be turned into a scapegoat on whom those frustrated by their limitations can vent their accumulated resentment. To some extent, everyone who gets into print—by writing or by running for office or by being elected, especially to a high position—becomes the subject of obscene comments. But not all of the immortals become scapegoats; some are deified more or less and misunderstood with boundless generosity, like Sophocles and some religious figures.

Why, then, did Nietzsche become an almost archetypal scapegoat on whom any writer is allowed to vent his spleen with complete impunity? Before we answer this question, we must try to understand the need for scapegoats.

In our culture, the most obvious scapegoat is the criminal. Those who feel a strong emotional need to see a criminal punished usually have two motives. If the lawbreaker did what they would have *liked* to do but, in obedience to the law, perhaps afraid of punishment, did *not* do, they would feel like timid fools who had missed out on something for no good reason if he got away with it. He must be punished to justify them and show that they were not silly and scared but prudent and righteous. Moreover, the law that prohibits so many expressions of hatred and aggression provides this legal outlet: the outlaw.

The world of scholarship provides a parallel. Again decorum prohibits frank expressions of contempt or pity, hatred, and resentment against fellow scholars. Most reviews in the scholarly journals are, therefore, exceedingly dull. Nor is this just decorum. If a scholar is old, one does not want to hurt his feelings and make him sad; if he is young, one hesitates to blast his career. Of course, there are exceptions,

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and occasionally "scholarly" books are attacked *almost* without inhibitions. Sometimes the nastiness of such reviews bears ample evidence of pent-up resentment; sometimes it is redeemed by wit. In fact, book reviews provide most scholars with the only opportunity to transmute resentment and wit into print. But some inhibitions remain; some holds are barred. Even when a book is treated without mercy, its *author* is almost always shown some consideration; the possibility is allowed that some of his other writings may be better, and reviewers do not feel free to offer psychological speculations about living philosophers or to question their sanity. Confronted with literary works, critics often go further, but even here mental illness is generally considered taboo and not mentioned even in cases where it is beyond question.

DE MORTUIS NIL NISI BONUM is the opposite of the truth as far as most scholars and critics are concerned. If a writer has the decency to let his work die with him, one says nothing about him once the eulogies are over. But it is in the ranks of the immortals that scholars seek their scapegoats about whom they can write as they never would about the living. Who would care to count the living philosophers who are incom-

parably more unscholarly, irrational, and irresponsible than Nietzsche ever was? That is the point. What could not be said about them is said about him.

The question remains why Nietzsche became a scapegoat when so many other philosophers did not—at least not to the same extent. His very brilliance is part of the reason, and his literary excellence is also relevant. Great writers are considered fairer game than great philosophers or scholars, and a philosopher who had the temerity to write as well as Nietzsche did breaks the rules as surely as an outlaw.

Still, this is not the whole story. What other writer of equal genius had given so much offence to so many, including Christians, Germans, and Englishmen? The vast resentment he aroused did its share to turn him into one of the major scapegoats of all time. This explanation may seem much too simple to be true; but it is striking how appreciative of him the French have been, whom he so often praised so handsomely; and this is also true of such Irish writers as Shaw and Yeats, Joyce and O'Neill, who clearly did not feel offended by his lack of affection for the English and for Christianity.

Once it was established by the force of ample precedent that utterly unscholarly and unfair articles and books on Nietzsche did not impair their authors' reputations even when they were exposed, writers with no particular reason for resenting Nietzsche joined the fray to blow off steam. Nietzsche-baiting had become an institution.

The implications for our "whole culture" are dismal. Not only decorum but also the intellectual conscience makes demands that even leading intellectuals resent. Even among them rationality is often only skin-deep. They require outlets for occasional rebellions against the demands of scholarship and sanity. One socially approved method is to write about Nietzsche, accusing him of having done what one is in the process of doing oneself.

Have I, too, criticised the very things that I myself am doing in these pages? I think not. Beginning with my first book, I have made it a point of honour to defend the dead and attack the living who can fight back. More than that, I have long admired Nietzsche's pronouncement in *Ecce Homo*:<sup>2</sup>

I never attack persons; I merely avail myself of the person as of a strong magnifying glass that allows one to make visible a general but creeping and elusive calamity.

<sup>2</sup> "Why I am So Wise," section 7, p. 688 (in my *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, Random House Modern Library, 1968).

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## BOOKS & WRITERS

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### Partridge in a Word Tree

By Anthony Burgess

LIKE many people who make their living out of them, I am very fond of words. A fondness for words does not, I know, necessarily make one a good writer. Mr. Geoffrey Grigson, the *Country Life* reviewer and poet, recently, in a review of a book of mine, expressed wonder that a person who professed such fondness for words should write so badly. I am not sure what exactly bad writing is, but Mr. Grigson is a very distinguished writer and he ought to know. That he writes wonderfully I am the first to admit—I have been so enthralled by some of his writing in *Country Life* that I have failed to hear the dentist's summons—and perhaps this has something to do with his not being very fond of words. If you are fond of words you let them get out of control, and good writing is perhaps essentially controlled writing. When I lived in Sussex I delighted in being able to look out on the Kentish Weald, but my delight had nothing to do with its wooded hilliness. What I liked was the word *weald* and how, through such processes as *i*-mutation, vowel-rounding, and vocalisation of the dark *L*, it tied up with *wold*, *wood* and the German *Wald*. Mr. Grigson has quite possibly written a poem on the Kentish Weald (he has written so many poems, a lot of them extremely fine, and I should imagine that country matters come into the subject-material of his age-group), but there will be nothing about *i*-mutation in that poem. A man of learning, he probably remembers Dr. Johnson's saying that things are the sons of heaven while words are only the daughters of men. The daughters of men have always been good enough for me, but a poet is perhaps himself a son of heaven, like a thing, and has a responsibility to his own kin.

I recognise that a fondness for words is, quite apart from its hindering one's chances as a writer, more of a lowly hobby than a sacerdotal vocation. It is perhaps on the same level as a fondness for collecting stones abraded by the beach, or keeping hamsters, or doing anything else which fills up spare time with mild pleasure.

Mr. Ivor Brown collects strange words, and he exhibits these—*doddipol*, *refocillate*, and so on—in little books which are quite popular. This sort of thing is amusing, but it has little to do with the study of language. Drag a word out of a sentence, and you turn it into a pretty fossil. If we study how words behave in contexts, which is the only way to study them, then we're getting away from a mere hobby and beginning to practise a very stern science—that of linguistics. This science is becoming so very specialised that ordinary literary men are mystified by it and even resentful. Literary men are always being told, chiefly by such polymaths as Lord Snow, that they ought to know something about science. I think this means that they ought to learn just enough about nuclear biology to revere those men who know a lot, but it ought to mean that they should study the science of their raw material, get down to linguistics. When Lord Snow himself does this, lesser literary men may follow his example.

I HAVE BEEN INTERESTED in linguistics for a long time—an interest that grew out of teaching English to foreigners—but I have to confess that linguistics has gone too far for me to follow. There are linguistic laboratories full of cybernetic marvels, and it is hard for the mere amateur to get into those. And there is a proliferation of linguistic technology carrying in its train a vocabulary so vast and specialised that the time is coming when it will require a linguistic study of its own. Indeed, Dr. Mario Pei has already produced a weighty *Glossary of Linguistic Terminology*, full of terms like “diffusion concept” and “morphophonemic allomorph.” The term *phoneme*, which most literary men think they understand clearly enough (e.g. Amis, *I Like It Here*: “cut Sinatra off in mid-phoneme”), appears with four separate definitions, starting with Bloomfield's “minimal unit of distinctive sound-feature” and ending with Fowkes' “minimal bundle of relevant sound features.” Dorman says that the

phoneme is a sound, and Fowkes says it is not: "it can be realised only through one of its allophones." I agree with the latter, but if I express agreement I must necessarily be looked on as a piece of intrusive dirt, not one of the professionals. And when you get on to suprasegmental parameters, you have reached a region where the literary man and the linguist have nothing in common at all: you have got beyond what can be fairly represented in traditional orthography.

There is, however, a field of true language study which lies between Mr. Ivor Brown's quaint old libraries and the unquaint new laboratories of the American linguists. It is concerned not with the analysis of sounds or structures but with the examination of meanings, and it is happier with the actual making of semantic catalogues, or dictionaries, than with arguing about, say, the overlap of semantics and anthropology or the borderlines between what is meaningful (*i.e.* lexical) and what is, so to speak, decorative (speech-tunes and stresses and so on). There is a New Zealander in England who follows Samuel Johnson in making lexicography a one-man calling and keeping it personal, healthily prejudiced, flavoursome and full of fun. This man is Eric Partridge, to whom, quite apart from his generosity to myself and my own work, I owe more hours of pleasurable uplift than I can well count. He is seventy-five this year, and is as vigorous as ever. His jubilee calls for more celebration than mere articles in magazines, but philology is rarely honoured by the State. Football, racing, and commerce are still regarded as more estimable than poring on the purity or impurity of the dialect of the tribe. Political men have no love of word-men.

PARTRIDGE'S PLEASURE in the English language has been manifested in the most diverse forms, and I'll start with the most hobbyish of his activities. I remember from the 1930s a couple of very good comedians called Clapham and Dwyer. They were always having to apologise or be barred from the BBC, which means they tended to heartening lowness. One evening on the radio they gave out an alphabet beginning "*A for 'orses*" and ending "*Z for a doctor, I've a code id the doze*." Partridge was not content merely to enjoy this. He brooded on the whole concept of the comic alphabet and eventually produced a book. A lot of work went into it—"opusculum and parergon alike," he calls it—and there is a long list of acknowledgments. The number of distinguished names

among the lovers of comic alphabets is formidable, and Partridge's tribute is heart-warming: "People have, in short, been wonderfully kind. But then, the majority of people *are* kind." Outside the public sector, as it is called, I suppose people are, though I say it wryly. The curious thing about useless activities, like the crankier kinds of philology, is that they promote sodality, and that might be a sufficient justification for their existence.

But must not the average, say, shop-steward or economic myrmidon feel sour about all this time-waste on "*B for mutton*" and "*C for Thighlanders*"? Balls and skittles may be played with, but words, which are holy things used for enshrining departmental directives, may not. The truth is that, apart from one's right to amuse oneself occasionally, word-play is a kind of muscle-flexing for word-use, and to ~~hold~~ hold words down into the rules of a game is to learn control over them. What Partridge calls "the most relentless and intolerable of all alphabetical poems," "*The Siege of Belgrade*" in *The Bentley Ballads*, 1861), is indeed horrible, but it had to be written:

*Why wish we warfare? Wherefore welcome we  
Xerxes, Ximenes, Xanthus, Xaviere?  
Yield, ye youths! ye yeomen, yield your yell!  
Zeno's, Zarpatus', Zoroaster's zeal,  
And all attracting—arms against appeal.*

If you can do that sort of thing through all twenty-six letters, you may be fairly deemed literate, and not less if you can, to the tune of *Roly Poly, Gammon and Spinach*, end up like this:

*W is for whore, who thinks fucking a farce,  
X, Y and Z you can stuff up your arse.*

Start off with a brain that can take pleasure in the scholarly collation of comic alphabets, and you end up with a genius that can produce one of the lexicographical masterpieces of all time—*A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English from the Fifteenth Century to the Present Day*.<sup>1</sup> I don't mean, of course, that Partridge began with the ludic stuff, but that a man interested in slang must be interested in word-play, because that's what slang is. To set the chronological record straight, the *Dictionary* first appeared in 1937, though fresh addenda have appeared periodically since, and the book on comic alphabets came out in 1961. In other words, Partridge fulfils the traditional usage of going out to play after going out to work. But the work still goes on: nothing changes more quickly than colloquial speech, and the task of keeping the *Dictionary* up-to-date is very large. A host of voluntary and unsolicited helpers

<sup>1</sup> Routledge, £6 6s.

sends in new slang, new etymologies, modifications in the definitions of old slang, and Partridge's work is cut out dealing with the daily postbag.

I SAID ABOVE THAT slang is word-play, but we have to think in terms less of pastime—charades and puzzles—than of anthropology. Lévi-Strauss has helped us to see the connection between primitive word-play or riddles and banned degrees of marital relationship in primitive societies. Oedipus had to get a riddle right before committing incest, and the same conflation of riddle and incest is to be found in the folklore of the Algonquin and Iroquois tribes. A prescribed system of phonemic substitution (on the analogy of Cockney back-slang) is in regular use as part of the courtship rituals of certain of the tribes of the Philippines, and this has to do with the element of conventional disguise which always appears when there is the prospect of marriage between members of the same family. British slang is concerned with maintaining a sort of endogamy: this comes out in, for instance, public-school slang: if you can't use it, you're an outsider. Cockney back-slang emphasises the gap between vendor and buyer: "*Some, delo nocab for the delo woc*" shows who is on which side of the grocer's counter. The point about rhyming-slang is less the rhyme, for the rhyme gives the clue, than what precedes the rhyme: to call a girl a richard assumes a rhyme between *Richard the Third* and *bird*, but the rhyme is the unspoken solution to a deliberate near-mystery. All this is, I think, of immense sociological interest.

One thing for which Partridge has never been sufficiently praised is his candid crudition in dealing with the so-called taboo words—unconventional English (*i.e.* not to be used in classrooms or legislative chambers) rather than true slang. The *Dictionary* proper (the big 1937 book which is always being modified by the thinner appendices) had to present these words with asterisks, but the permissiveness that came in with the *Lady Chatterley* victory has enabled Partridge to spell things out in the latest appendix. The freedom with which English interchanges parts of speech is beautifully demonstrated in the articles on *fuck*, though I think Partridge still has to parse the word in statements like "So he stood there fuck in the middle of the parade-ground."

More than anything, it is the painstaking digging for etymologies that must be admired, and when digging yields nothing, the imaginative flash that blinds the pedant. Sometimes Partridge fails to satisfy, but nobody else could either. Thus, *ackermaracker* is a low term for tea, first noted about 1920, and still sometimes

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heard among older lorry-drivers. Where does it come from? Partridge suggests substitution of a back-stop for a front one, so that *teu* becomes *kea*, then back-slang *ack*, then a reduplication process with rhythmical decorations. This does not really work, but what could? Most of our obscenities have the most noble etymologies, but Partridge, rejecting Grose's *quemar* (Spanish: to burn) as the origin of *\*quim*, does not do much better with his Celtic *cwm*—a cleft, a valley. The real clue surely comes in his article on *cunt*, with its radical *cu* for "quintessential physical femineity" and the cow as a sacred animal. Certainly, *queen* and *quim* seem to be cognate, and we see this more clearly in the hive (or with the Elizabethan *quean*—prostitute) than in the presence chamber.

IF I GIVE THE IMPRESSION that Partridge's work has lain chiefly among dirty words, that is because he is most notable among British philologists for a total lack of squeamishness and a thoroughly healthy relish for the tongue of the common man. To look through his list of published works, a very formidable one, is to see that all aspects of the living language interest him equally, and "living" does not necessarily mean "contemporary": his key to Swift's *Polite Conversations* (1957) is a classic of witty and courteous exegesis. He has done good work on the so-called "literary" language, but he is happiest with what is rarely recorded in literature—the demotic poetry that turns the penis into "old blind Bob" and makes rude boys on bicycles ask girls if they like bananas and cream.

A book that has just been reprinted does triumphantly what Partridge seems best qualified to do—namely, show the good coarse roots of the common man in a writer so uncommon as to suffer from the rarefaction of his adulators. The writer is Shakespeare and the book is *Shakespeare's Bawdy*.<sup>2</sup> As Edmund Wilson said, reviewing the book when it first appeared in America, "the timidity or the ignorance of the academic approach to Shakespeare has left some large and awkward gaps in textual elucidation. Falstaff at Mistress Quickly's and Katharine of France learning English have been made to seem even more scandalous through being thrown into naked relief by the commentators' sudden silence. . . ." What was always needed was a book that would kill prurience in the egg, and enable even schoolboys to control their

<sup>2</sup> Eric Partridge, *Shakespeare's Bawdy*. (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 35s., paperback 14s.)

sniggers. The image of a Shakespeare as "Freudian" as Henry James (whose Roderick Hudson embarrassingly "swings his tool") is still common in the classroom. Partridge's introductory essay and exhaustive glossary show that Shakespeare encloses Freud as he encloses everybody else. He always knew what he was doing.

Partridge sees, rightly, that in Shakespeare "the nexus between the sexual act and literary creation is closer, more potent, more subtly psychosomatic than in any other writer, whether of verse or prose." His very name is a sort of sexual banner: the spear-shaking is obvious, but the *Will* has its own richness, signifying not only libido in general but also passionate sexual desire in immediate encounters, standing also for both the penis and what Partridge has always called the female pudend. Take the following sonnet:

*Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy Will,  
And Will to boot, and Will in overplus,  
More than enough am I that vex thee still,  
To thy sweet will making addition thus.  
Wilt thou, whose will is large and spacious,  
Not once vouchsafe to hide my will in thine?  
Shall will in others seem right gracious,  
And in my will no fair acceptance shine?  
The sea, all water, yet receives rain still,  
And in abundance addeth to his store;  
So thou, being rich in Will, add to thy Will  
One will of mine, to make thy large Will more.  
Let no unkind, no fair beseechers kill;  
Think all but one, and me in that one Will.*

The *Will* in the first two lines presents the entire complex—Shakespeare himself as desirous lover, lust, the sexual organs. The fourth and fifth lines have *will* as pudend (to keep Partridge's term); in the sixth *will* is the penis. The next three *wills* seem to signify desire, and the last four are the organs again—one penis among three pudends—though the final *Will* seems involved in a complex ambiguity like the shout of a full orchestra.

Anything that deepens our appreciation of Shakespeare and, at the same time, demonstrates both his closeness to his common audience and the driving forces of his inner life, is to be welcomed greatly. *Shakespeare's Bawdy* is, like Hotson's *First Night of Twelfth Night* and G. B. Harrison's *Shakespeare at Work*, a book that turns scholarship into a human joy. Partridge's diamond jubilee is aptly toasted in this reissue, though, I repeat, it should have been marked by more than publisher's honours. Perhaps there is time enough for a wider acknowledgment of his achievements. He is fit, upright, lively, hard at work. Philology seems to keep a man young.



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# The Smashers

By Maurice Cranston

PENGUIN BOOKS have brought out a selection<sup>1</sup> from the speeches made at the Congress on the Dialectics of Liberation (held at the Round House in Chalk Farm in July 1967), edited by one of the organisers, Dr. David Cooper. This Penguin is fairly short, but the speeches may be heard *in extenso* on twenty-three long-playing, not to say long-winded, records for £30. The Congress must clearly be reckoned a success, if only in bringing together the diverse elements of New Left thought and fashionable progressive sentiment.

The speakers at the Congress appear at first sight to be an ill-assorted company. There is Allen Ginsburg, that beguiling champion of non-violence and love. There is Stokely Carmichael, handsome and agreeably young, an equally arresting advocate of violence and hate. Then there is the finicky German voice of Herbert Marcuse grumbling about the workers of North America being rich, and John Gerassi, a former editor of *Time* magazine, complaining about the workers of South America being poor. There are some vigorous attacks, in the spirit of Rousseau and Ruskin, on the horrors of industrialisation, and various echoes of Aldous Huxley's theory that drugs can expand men's minds.

However, it is the nature of dialectic (as dialectic is understood in Left-wing circles) to reconcile antitheses so that any contradiction one might detect between the principles put forward by different speakers, or by the same speaker at different stages of his own argument, can be treated as the potential elements of a Higher Synthesis. The process is enlivened by the incantation of words like "imperialism," "rape of Viet Nam," "organisational capitalism," "bourgeois repression" and "liberation," with which this book is generously peppered.

The best speech is nevertheless the least dialectical; it is Stokely Carmichael's statement of the objectives of the Black Power movement, and this could not be more plainly Aristotelian in its logic; white is separated totally and absolutely from black. The aim of Black Power, Mr. Carmichael explains, is to "smash" the "system of international white supremacy coupled with international capitalism." He adds: "And people who see themselves as part of that system are going to be smashed with it—or we're going to be smashed."

<sup>1</sup> *The Dialectics of Liberation*. Edited by DAVID COOPER. Penguin Books, 5s.

Mr. Carmichael is commendably frank in admitting that this talk of "smashing" means real violence. It is justified, he claims, because the white races have themselves introduced violence: "I don't understand how the white West can talk against violence. They are the most violent people on the face of the earth. They have used violence to get everything they have." Mr. Carmichael protests that the black people have tried "for the past four hundred years to co-exist" in the United States, but it "has been of no avail. . . . We are now being shot down like dogs in the street by white racist policemen. We can no longer accept this oppression without retribution." Mr. Carmichael admits that it is not possible for "black people to take over the whole country militarily," but he points out that the industrial and commercial heart of the nation is in the great cities.

*We [black people] are in the cities. We can become and are becoming a disruptive force in the flow of services, goods and capital. While we disrupt internally and aim for the eye of the octopus, we are hoping that our brothers are disrupting externally to sever the tentacles of the United States.*

Mr. Carmichael explains why, under his leadership, the American Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee, the SNCC, has, while retaining the title, both abandoned the doctrine of non-violence and ousted white liberals from membership: "No white liberal," he writes, "can give me anything. The only thing a white liberal can do for me is to help civilise other whites, because they need to be civilised." He even goes so far as to suggest that the white liberal desire for racial integration rests on unconscious racism, namely, on the patronising belief that white Americans ought to *accept* the black people, instead of asking whether the black people want to accept the white.

The integration movement has never been able to involve the black proletariat. It could never attract and hold the young bloods who clearly understood the savagery of white America and who were ready to meet it with armed resistance. It is the young bloods who contain especially the hatred that Che Guevara speaks of when he says, and I quote: "Hatred is an element of the struggle. . . ."

Mr. Carmichael next develops a kind of neo-Marxism in which a concept of Race takes the place of Marx's own concept of Class:

Our analysis is one that begins in race. Colour and culture were, and are, key factors in our oppression. Therefore our history and our economic analysis are rooted in these concepts.

Thus, instead of Marx's proletariat of working men, Mr. Carmichael proclaims the existence of a proletariat of coloured men which has the mission of overthrowing not the bourgeoisie, but "white western society."

Evidently in the discussion which followed Mr. Carmichael's paper someone must have made the obvious point that he was putting forward a racist doctrine; for we find Dr. Cooper in his final essay invoking the dialectical method to deny this assertion. There is "nothing racist" about Mr. Carmichael's argument, he claims, "because there is only a contingent but not a necessary identity of white power and imperialism." Hence, Dr. Cooper concludes, Mr. Carmichael's position is not "a sort of counter-racism," but "the passionate recognition . . . that the position of black people in the U.S.A. is a relation of direct continuity with the condition of the people in the Third World struggling towards their liberation." But Dr. Cooper is surely less than fair to Mr. Carmichael in thus reducing a vigorous thesis to an innocuous platitude.

Mr. Carmichael's argument seems to me to be an imprudent one, alarming and morally wrong; but he has at least the existentialist virtues of authenticity and lucidity, and it is no kindness to him to make out that he does

not mean what he says. Dr. Cooper's own contributions are decidedly opaque, despite his use of fashionably rude words like "fuck" and "shit" to explain his view of mankind's present predicament. What he seems to be saying is that we are all oppressed (not only the black people) by the existing social structures. He pleads accordingly for a re-structuring of all our institutions, including "family, school, university, mental hospital, factory." Unfortunately, Dr. Cooper does not say what he would wish to put in the place of these existing institutions. He seems to feel that one has only to get rid of what we have for something better to spring up spontaneously. He speaks of removing "mystification," but does not show where true knowledge is to be found.

Dr. R. D. Laing's paper is a rather more elegant statement of similar sentiments. Neither individual salvation nor the seizure of the state, he says, is the kind of revolutionary change that is needed. Salvation lies rather in "sudden, structural, radical qualitative changes in the intermediate system levels: changes in a factory, a hospital, a school, a university, a set of schools, or a whole area of industry, medicine, education, etc." Even so, Dr. Laing is somewhat less hopeful than is Dr. Cooper about finding the knowledge that is to save mankind.

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There is almost nothing we *can* know about the total world social system, or any of the systems for several levels down from there. But it is possible to know that we cannot so know....

On this healthily sceptical note, Dr. Laing's paper ends; the only curious feature is that he himself, in earlier paragraphs, claims to know quite a lot about the world system we live under. He says that in Viet Nam, for example, millions of peasants are fighting for their own

land on the one side while, on the other, "mercenaries, well-paid, well-fed, steel-trained specialists in the technology of killing" are out "to destroy all forms of life over a sector of the earth's surface." How, on his own showing Dr. Laing can "know" this any more than other people can "know" that in Viet Nam American soldiers are heroically supporting the defensive war of the "South against Communist aggression, it is impossible to say.

## Dreams of Heaven . .

*The Round House, Chalk Farm*

ON TUESDAY MORNING, the lack of communication was compounded still further by Stokely Carmichael's apparent inability to have a direct face-to-face conversation with anyone who happened to disagree with him on the question of black-white relationships and the violence/counter-violence syndrome. Carmichael is a charismatic speaker. His interpretation of Black Power is exactly correct, his analysis of what has been done to the Negro and the coloured people of the Third World is radical and acute (though not very original, deriving largely from Che Guevara and Frantz Fanon), and every white man should listen to what he is saying and try to understand, if only for his own good.

In the final analysis, however, I do not think that the man is authentic. Especially when he read from his prepared notes, he began to sound like a machine, and as he neared the end of his speech the mindless slogans ("we're gonna burn the system to the ground") seemed to take over and gain control, so that he slid into stupid demagoguery.

From demagoguery he went into nearly incoherent rage as questions began to come up from the floor that challenged his fundamental assumptions. Despite his self-professed determination to talk, not about the individual, but about groups and organisations and mass resistance and the building up of "revolutionary black consciousness," Carmichael is finally not a political man. He interprets the world, not just partially, but totally through his own wounded resentment at "the goddam white man." The result is frantic abstractions ("black guerrilla warfare throughout the West") and a fight for petty victories and spite, which are not political propositions, though they are good for the soul. On this evidence, at least, precisely the biggest trouble with Carmichael is his charisma and the fact that he seems to love his charisma. It is the psychology of explosive apocalypse, of "burn, baby, burn," and it is frankly terrifying in its drift towards nihilism.

MY OWN FEELING is that Carmichael is wishing, consciously or unconsciously, for catastrophe, and is actively working to bring it about. The longing for a blow-up occurs in people who are so enmeshed in a frustrating system that they have

no vitality apart from it: and their vitality in it is explosive rage. In my experience, very few American Negroes are so psychologically committed to the dominant social system that they need its total destruction and consequently just for Armageddon. They have dreams of heaven but not of hellfire. A few exemplary burnings and lootings serve to mollify their natural desire for vengeance for the time being. Their intellectual leaders, however, who are verbally and willy-nilly psychologically enmeshed in the hated system, find it necessary to be more apocalyptic.

In other words, contrary to his own claims, Carmichael takes his values and his definitions of violence ready-made from the dominant white society, precisely because he has no alternative values to offer. Just as he mislabels all the victims "black," so he mislabels all the executioners "white." He should know by now that the authority which pertains throughout man's society is not an authority of race but an institutionalised authority of property and arms. He should know, too, that the life-denying evil inheres in the nature of that authority and not in the colour of its functionaries or agents. If he wanted change he would speak change. Instead, he confines himself to a fantasy so absolute in its rejection that it amounts finally to little more than business as usual, the other side of the white liberal coin. That hectic rage, so resonant in its anger—partly real, partly manufactured—is not going to effect any really deep qualitative change. Still, there it is: people like myself, who have been pacifist and anti-state for years, have not got much to show him for our efforts.

I have dealt with Carmichael at some length, not simply because he is important for the wrong reasons, but because he seemed to set the tone for the greater part of the proceedings at this congress. There was precious little dialogue after his tirade, and he contributed almost nothing towards the "demystification" of all forms of human violence which was the ostensible purpose of the congress. If anything, violence was more mystifying and canonised than ever by the time he sat down....

THERE WAS A MAJOR "ideological" split among the participants. On the one hand, we had a majority composed of militant political activists who seek

But of course it is not the reality of events in Viet Nam that matters to the Round House congressistes, but the myth, a myth that provides a vicarious outlet for aggression as well as a simplified story (no matter how false) to appease the bewilderment of puzzled minds. A matter of greater substance is the point which is made by both Dr. Cooper and Dr. Laing about Revolution taking place at "intermediate system levels" such as universities (which they

### ... & Hellfire

*to ally themselves with "historical forces," who wish to hook up the radical movements in the West with violent revolutionary colonial movements throughout the Third World, and whose understanding of the clear and distinct outlines of decaying capitalism is pretty solidly Marxist in its orientation. On the other hand, we had a small minority composed of the much more "existential" social psychologists and artists who are concerned with problems of consciousness, power corruption, excessive urbanisation, alienating technology, ecological balance, the liberatory potentialities of art, knowledge, education, contemplation, and in general with the perennial question of how people liberate themselves.*

*I suppose that my own prejudices on this split are by now fairly clear. Certainly, the militant Marxists, whether revisionists or orthodox, perceive what the main problems are, but I doubt that they have much to say to us in our modern conditions, so far as the possibilities for reconstruction are concerned. They do not seem to pause for a moment to consider the dismal record of attempts to take control of institutions, and they somewhat conveniently forget that so many angry but earnest reformers in our time have been corrupted and done in by the demon of power, their visions twisted or discarded. This is not to say that institutional changes are irrelevant but that they are insufficient. At best, they constitute the necessary though not sufficient cause of the Good Life: at worst, they are a snare and a delusion. Frankly, I found it dismaying and profoundly disheartening to hear speakers like John Gerassi and Ernest Mandel and Carmichael talking about or implying the necessity for organised terrorism, co-ordinated sabotage, and discriminatory violence throughout the affluent West, for they do not sound like normal grown men when they pontificate in this manner. They should come to their senses and realise that their proposals will get us nowhere except the mass grave. As for "historical forces," I sometimes think that these are rationalisations invented by the oppressed to confirm their impotence.*

Roger Barnard, an Editor of PEACE NEWS, in his report on "The Dialectics of Liberation Conference" (July 1967), in NEW SOCIETY (London).

both mention). For here we have a glimpse of the theory that lies behind much of the so-called "student" activism which has been taking place in recent months. Marx, of course, was impatient of such adventures; but the New Left has forsaken Marx's hope of the working class' seizure of the state, and now seeks instead to revolutionise smaller institutions by the action of a different kind of "proletariat."

Anyone curious about the intentions behind the recent stormy events at the L.S.E. and elsewhere would do well to consult this book, and to reflect on the doctrines of violence and social "transformation" which are expounded here. There is still a widespread belief that all university disturbances are sparked off by "student grievances," whereas many of them are part of a systematic campaign, inspired by New Left theory and carried out by New Left zealots in Senior as well as Junior Common Rooms, which aims at destroying the traditional "bourgeois authoritarian" universities and setting up in their place free centres of Student Power. Dr. Cooper suggests in his preface that the Round House Conference was "really the founding event of the Anti-university of London." It may also be seen as a key event in the current project of overthrowing the existing University of London.

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# Central European Flash-back

By Hugh Seton-Watson

NINETEEN SIXTY-EIGHT was a dramatic year in Central Europe. It began with the overthrow of Novotny; in the spring came the student demonstrations in Warsaw and the upsurge of Czech and Slovak liberty; in the autumn, invasion by the heirs of the Tsars and the Khans, accompanied by their Polish, Prussian and other vassals. It was also a year of anniversaries. Fifty years before, the Habsburg Monarchy broke in pieces, and the republic of Thomas Masaryk was founded. Twenty years later that republic was partitioned at Munich by agreement between its enemies and its allies. Ten years after that, the satraps who ruled the Czechoslovak Communist Party took over the country, and Jan Masaryk, the son of Thomas, was found dead below an open window in the Czernin Palace. In this same year the blockade of Berlin began.

Most men and women in Central Europe, even those with a sparse formal education, are perforce aware of their history, whose triumphs and tragedies reach back far beyond 1918. As I have been associated with Central Europe all my adult life, and my father for thirty years before that, and as I have spent a good deal of the last twenty years studying the modern history of Russia, I too am aware of these things. Past and present chase each other through the mind, like some cinema flash-back in the worst of taste. Unfortunately, all the scenes on this film were real.

THE WARSAW STUDENTS' PROTEST in March 1968 began because the government had banned a dramatisation by the National Theatre of the poem *Dziady* by Adam Mickiewicz. This work was written under the influence of the Polish Rising of 1830, and is full of anti-Russian passion. In a poem published at the end of the Third Part of *Dziady*, entitled "To My Moscow Friends," the Polish poet recalls his own years in Russia and the friends he made. One was the poet Ryleev, a revolutionary who

was the most active of the St. Petersburg insurgents of 14 December 1825, and one of the five who were condemned to death. Remembering his friend, Mickiewicz wrote: "*A curse on a people which murders its own prophets...*"

Mickiewicz had also been a friend of Pushkin, and used to belong to the same circle in the Russian capital. But Pushkin in 1830 placed himself at the head of the chorus of Russian chauvinists. In his poem "To the Slanderers of Russia" he thundered against the Poles and their foreign friends. The Russo-Polish war was a dispute between Slavs, in which outsiders had no concern. "Will the Slav streams flow together into the Russian sea? Or will that sea dry up? That is the question." To Mickiewicz, Pushkin was a traitor to all their common cherished beliefs. "Perhaps one of you," he wrote in the "Diversions" to *Dziady*, "has for ever abandoned the freedom of his soul to the favour of the Tsar... glorifies his triumph with venal tongue, and comforts himself with the martyrdom of his friends." This was less than fair to Pushkin, whose poem "From the Depths of the Siberian Mines" (not, of course, publishable in 1831) was a tribute to the Decembrist martyrs. There was also found in Pushkin's papers, after his death, an incomplete poem addressed to an unknown friend, a Russian who had grieved over the fall of Warsaw to the Russians. It contains the words: "You sobbed bitterly, as the Jew sobbed over Jerusalem..."

Poland and Russia have come a long way since Pushkin and Mickiewicz were *frères ennemis*. From the time of Kosciuszko onwards, Polish soldiers were often to be found on battlefields where the freedom of nations was held to be at stake. Their proud slogan, learned by every Polish child to the present day, was "For our liberty and yours! (*za naszą i waszą wolność*)."

In 1918, thanks partly to their own brave efforts and partly to the fantastic good fortune that the German and Russian empires collapsed within a few months of each other, the Poles recovered their national independence. Unfortunately, it cannot be said that the new rulers of Poland treated Polish peasants or workers, not to mention Ukrainians or Jews, very much better than the Tsars had done. As for the Polish army, twenty years after independence had been won, it was ordered to enter neighbouring Czechoslovakia, in support of the policies of the *Führer* of the Third Reich, Adolf Hitler. It is true that Poland had a strong claim to a piece of Czechoslovak territory, but its action, to say the least, was ill-timed. It is also true that within less than a year the people of Poland were paying rather a high price for this success.

For nearly two years Poland reverted to its earlier role of helpless object and theatre of German-Russian cooperation. In 1849 at the Russian frontier running through Poland, the Saxon government had handed over Michael Bakunin to the Tsar's police. In 1940 at other frontier posts in the middle of Poland, the Soviet security police handed over to the *Gestapo* numbers of German and other European anti-fascists. About the same time, the Soviet government ordered something which Tsar Nicholas I would never have permitted: at least four thousand Polish officers, taken prisoner by the Soviet army as they were retreating before the German invasion, were shot in the back of the neck in Russian prisoner-of-war camps. Even after Hitler had invaded Russia, a sort of negative German-Russian cooperation remained as far as Poles were concerned. When the people of Warsaw rose against the Germans in August 1944, the Soviet army waited on the east bank of the Vistula. Only when the Germans had reduced Warsaw to rubble, and massacred or deported its citizens, did the Soviet army resume its advance.

In 1945 the Fifth Partition of Poland was not restored. Instead, an ethnically homogeneous Polish state was set up, and shifted several hundreds of miles westwards (at the expense of eight million Germans expelled from their homes). This new Poland was at first little more than a province of the Russian Soviet Empire. In 1956, however, the Polish Communist Government, under Wladyslaw Gomulka, obtained effective internal sovereignty. Unfortunately, as in the case of the Polish Republic between the wars, it cannot be said that Poland became a happy land. It is true that the peasants have fared better under Gomulka than under the eastern satrap Bierut: the gains of other classes and social groups are more questionable. As for the Polish army, it was at last given a task to perform in August 1968. Side by side with their friends the Russians and the Prussians, the Polish soldiers marched into Czechoslovakia to impose censorship and to deprive Czechs and Slovaks of their liberty. It only remains for Gomulka to demonstrate how far Poland has advanced since Kosciuszko's time by formally adopting the slogan "for our enslavement and yours (*za naszą i waszą niewolę*). . . ."

PLUS ÇA CHANGE. . . . Pushkin told the Western nations that they had no business to meddle in a dispute between Slavs: Brezhnev's spokesmen say that the invasion of Czechoslovakia is an internal matter for the "socialist camp." Pushkin feared that if all the Slav streams did not flow into the Russian sea, the sea would dry

up: Brezhnev that if any "socialist" state adopted institutions different from his own, then his régime and those of his satraps would be in danger.

A hundred and forty-two years after the Decembrists rebelled on the Senate Square in St. Petersburg, and five men were hanged for treason, five people appeared on the Red Square in Moscow to protest against the invasion of Czechoslovakia. They have got off more lightly than Ryleev. This time Russia has not murdered its prophets, only exiled them for three to five years. Admittedly, they had committed no armed rebellion. They are more comparable with Pushkin's unknown Polonophile, weeping for Prague instead of Warsaw—"as the Jew sobbed over Jerusalem." The parallel is apt, for one of the five, the poetess Gorbanevskaya, has described how the security policemen who arrested and beat them called them "dirty Yids."

Pushkin grieved for the Decembrists. In his famous poem he wrote:

"your toil and sorrow, your thoughts fixed on lofty aims, shall not go wasted." The prison bars would break, he ended, "and freedom shall receive you joyful at the gate, and your brothers shall give you back your sword."

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**ATALLAH MANSOUR**

Foreword by David Pryce-Jones

# In a new light

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But Pushkin was wrong. Their efforts were vain, and no one gave them back their sword. Some years later the young Herzen and Ogaryov, standing on the Sparrow Hills overlooking Moscow, swore to avenge the Decembrists. They spent their lives in planning revolution, but vengeance was not theirs. Nearly a half-century after Herzen's death came the greatest of those human cataclysms which from time to time occur in the history of Russia. It is as if the tears and sweat of generation after generation of untold millions of exploited and tormented Russian men and women had flowed together into vast deep lakes, and in the end the lakes overflowed, and the whole land was flooded. The flood brings wonderful utopian hopes and joys, but it does not last long. When the waters subside, autocracy is back again.

The first Red autocrat chastised the Russians with whips, his successor with scorpions. Then came the hordes of Antichrist, and the tormented *kolkhozniks* and forced labourers put on their uniforms, and fought for those who chastised them with the same fatalism and the same heroism as the tormented serfs of 1812 had fought for the Tsar and the serf-owners against the earlier Antichrist from Corsica. And when the soil of Holy Russia was clear of the invaders, on they went to impose the yoke of their tormentors on other peoples too. In 1945 they bravely fought the Germans out of Budapest, leaving it in ruins. Behind them came the security policemen, and within a couple of years the liberated Hungarians were getting to know the fake trials, kidnappings, torture-chambers, and pseudocracy (government by lie) that are modern Russia's special contribution to world civilisation. Some years later the Hungarians overthrew the satraps who tormented them on behalf of the rulers of Russia, and back came the Russian soldiers. By this time Budapest had arisen from its ruins. The second Russian occupation was materially less damaging than the first, but morally more frightful. In 1945 the Hungarians, after years of war and hardship following on decades of misgovernment by a selfish landowning class, were exhausted and willing to accept almost anything. In 1956 they saw freedom and dignity within their reach, for a few days they grasped them, and then they were crushed again. Twelve years later they saw their small army sent to deprive the Czechs and Slovaks of liberty, as allies of the Russians and Prussians who together had destroyed their own capital city, and of the Poles who had once helped them to fight for their liberty.

For the Russian people there is no question of liberty, to raise difficult moral problems, or trouble the conscience. Slaves and enslavers they

have always been: no other role could seem conceivable to them.

"I find in Russia two classes: the slaves of the sovereign and the slaves of the landowners.... The interest of the nobility is that the peasants should be in their unlimited power; the interest of the peasants is that the nobility should be in the same degree of dependence on the throne."

The writer was Speransky, in 1802. *Plus ça change....* For "sovereign" read "party leaders," and for "landowners," "*apparatchiks*," and for "peasants," "people," and the sentence would describe the Russia of today. The party leaders are sometimes unsure of themselves, and in recent times they have sometimes been divided: the Tsars were often weak men, and their advisers were often divided. Yet in both cases the autocratic power has been decisive, and in both cases the autocratic power has considered it the sum of political wisdom to play the middle against the lower levels. When the masses become restive, the élite is encouraged to squeeze them dry; when the élite gets a taste for liberty, the masses are brought in to knock the nonsense out of them. When necessary the roles are varied or reversed: slaves can become enslavers, and when they have done their duty they revert to slavery.

AND YET THERE IS ALSO another tradition in Russian history, another human type, for which the only possible word is saint. These were men and women who served the truth, as they saw it, and gave their lives for it, without thought of worldly reward and often without thought of changing the temporal order of things. Such people have existed in most nations, but there were perhaps more of them, and their spirit burned perhaps more purely in Russia than in other lands. There were the saints of Kiev Rus, and the saints of the Schism and the religious sects of more recent times. Something of the spirit of the saints was inherited by a section of the secular intelligentsia and even of the revolutionary movement. These were of course concerned with the temporal order. Yet there is in the history of the revolutionary movement, despite a certain overlapping zone, a recognisable distinction between the two types of the saint and the destroyer, between those who gave their lives to the passion for truth and justice, and those whom hatred and ambition drove to smash all around them and to erect their own power on the ruins. The second type was more likely to make a success of revolutionary politics, and its supreme example was Lenin. But the first type was also

to be found, among the Populists and even among the Marxists. In more recent times the type of the saint, who bears witness for truth at all costs, has reappeared in Pasternak and Solzhenitsyn, and in a somewhat more political form in Pavel Litvinov, Larissa Daniel, and their fellow-sufferers.

The saintly tradition has never had the slightest effect on politics, but its influence may be seen in literature and art. However, one of the special skills of Russian rulers, especially in the Soviet period, has been to exploit the glories of literature and music for their own purposes. Pushkin and Tolstoy, dead, are used to bolster the prestige of rulers who reached power by the Great Terror in which ten million Russians perished. Brilliant violinists and ballet-dancers are unable to prevent themselves from being used as instruments for the moral and political disarmament of their masters' potential rivals or victims.

All nations, of course, have had and have their liars and their hypocrites. But the lie has become in Soviet Russia the greatest and most efficient of the national industries. The oppression and humiliation of millions of men and women co-exists with the incantation, from millions of bureaucratic throats, of empty moralising slogans. This obscene combination, on this scale, is peculiar to the Soviet régime. A prophetic glimpse can be found in the great novel by the 19th-century satirist Saltykov-Shchedrin, *The Golovyyov Family*. The central figure, the unforgettable Yudushka, compared to whom Tartuffe and Uriah Heep are as the Chevalier Bayard, had the habit of reciting moral clichés in the face of the misfortunes of others, including his own son whom he allowed to die without lifting a finger. The whole mechanism of publicity in the Soviet Union, from Leningrad to Yakutsk, is staffed by hundreds of thousands of little Yudushka Golovyyovs.

*Aus der Welt die Freiheit verschwunden ist  
Man sieht nur Herren und Knechte  
Die Falschheit herrscht, die Hinterlist  
Bei dem feigen Menschengeschlechte.*

THE MUNICH AGREEMENT has been the subject of speeches, books, and articles covering thousands of square miles of paper, and no doubt more are to come. Let us leave aside the subtleties of diplomatic history. Two things remain most strongly in my mind. The first is the effect on the Czech people. By Munich they were cheated out of the right to fight for their country, and this bit deep into them. The same thing happened to them in 1948 and again in 1968, and nobody can say what the consequences of these three experi-

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ences will be. The second thing is the effect on my own generation. By this I mean those persons in their early 20s who were politically conscious, not only in England but in other countries of Europe. Those who are too young to remember, and those who did not then care one way or the other about politics, will be unable to understand how we felt in 1938, and therefore unable to understand the peculiar horror for us of the events of 21 August 1968.

I had spent the summer of 1938 partly in Czechoslovakia and partly in Yugoslavia. When in Czechoslovakia I had been to an area of German population. By this time, of course, the majority of the Germans of Czechoslovakia had been roused into fascist hysteria by Hitler's agents. But there were others. I shall never forget them, and I do not believe that they deserve to be forgotten. I have found some pages I wrote, after Munich, and I quote part of them because they have the flavour of the time. The article was entitled "Sacrifice Unexampled," and began:

Mr Chamberlain has shown, we are told, a capacity for sacrifice unexampled in history. He has sacrificed half the resources of a friendly state, its coal, glass, textiles, radium. He has sacrificed the living of thousands of Czechs, dependent directly or indirectly on lost industries. He has sacrificed its defences. . . . He has sacrificed half a million German democrats and a million Czechs, condemned to choose between German civilisation and starvation in Prague or in exile.

Last July I lived with some of these Germans in Western Bohemia. My host was a school-teacher. His wife taught in another small town, separated by four hours of railway-journey in each direction. They only saw each other at week-ends. During the week they taught, the only democratic members of their staff, children kept hysterical by parents, relatives and friends; tried to prevent them kicking little Jews. Insulted and cheated by their colleagues, threatened by their neighbours, even by children who showed them the lamp-posts from which they would be hung when He should come, they never deserted their principles. Their daily work finished, they began their party activity, wrote articles and pamphlets, visited members, addressed meetings.

At four o'clock one morning I rose to come by special train to Pilsen with 300 Social Democratic workmen, for a meeting with the Czech party. The Germans marched from one end of the town, the Czechs from the other, and converged on the main square, where speeches were held. The streets were lined with Czech citizens sometimes ten deep, and as we passed they shouted, "Long live our German friends." And the Germans answered, "Long live the Republic."

Such enthusiasm these Germans had never known. Many of them wept. For a year they had lived under terrorism and hate, and they had not lost their courage. Jaksch said to me, "It did them good. For one day they have lived among human beings." But Lord Runciman told Mr. Chamberlain that Mr. Hitler had told him that Germans and Czechs cannot live together in one state. And of course Mr. Hitler knows.

The self-fulfilling prophecies of Mr. Chamberlain and the other gentlemen proved right. After taking the German provinces, Hitler took the Czech lands as well, and for the next six years he oppressed and insulted the Czech people. It was the educated Czechs, and especially the intellectual professions, who suffered most, and it was Germans from the Bohemian borderlands who did most of the denunciation, arresting, torturing and killing. When Hitler's *Reich* collapsed, the Czechs took a horrible revenge. A million Germans fled from Bohemia, and two million more were expelled, often in inhuman conditions. Thousands perished in the process—how many, no one really knows. Among those expelled were many who had resisted Hitler's agents and been loyal to the Republic. Officially, these loyal German democrats were supposed to be well treated, and allowed to stay in the Republic if they wished. In practice the distinction was usually ignored. One reason was that a very high proportion of those educated Czechs who best understood the Germans, and most genuinely believed in the need for friendship between free Czechs and free Germans, had perished at the hands of Hitler's butchers, and that a large number of those Czechs responsible for the expulsions were peasants or workers who had lived rather comfortably under the occupation, and now sought to prove their patriotism by bullying defenceless Germans. In any case, a tremendous volume of hatred had been created on both sides, and in the following twenty years the Soviet leaders did all they could to exploit it for their own ends. Yet in recent years personal relationships have been built between Czechs and Germans, particularly between young people. It is very doubtful whether the familiar clichés about undying German-Czech hatred are still valid.

My 1938 article continued:

Mr. Chamberlain's friends are right. Such sacrifices, such peace, such honour were never known in Britain. Such achievements have their price. Our generation will pay it. First the young Czechs, faced with ruin, social collapse and "salvation from Bolshevism." Then my Yugoslav friends, young men and women who have fought for nine years a cruel tyranny, who have hoped, studied and worked for freedom, and were

within sight of victory when their friends stabbed them in the back. German civilisation is on the march to the East.

First come the bombing aeroplanes and the soldiers. Then follow the secret police, the informers and the race-experts. Little notices are posted up—*Juden sind unerwünscht*. A husband does not return to his wife one evening; after three weeks a neat parcel arrives, the urn containing his ashes. Last of all come the bosses and their bodyguards, and the Leader thanks God—a brilliant second—for the mission entrusted to him.

Well, my generation paid the price all right. Peace did not even last out Mr. Chamberlain's time. It was my Yugoslav friends who paid the highest price. It was precisely the Belgrade students and young graduates, with whom I had spent so much of my time in 1938, who formed the cadres of Tito's army of liberation. Some of them survived. Among those who did not, I remember especially "Lola" Ribar, the student leader, and Veselin Masleša, a Montenegrin economist, both communists and both outstanding human beings.

BUT THE PASSAGE I HAVE QUOTED has a sinister topicality. For "Bolshevism" read "counter-revolution"; for "German," "Soviet"; and for

"East," "West," and most of the first paragraph could refer to 1968. The second paragraph is admittedly less relevant. There are no race-experts in the Soviet security police. Hitler did the job of extermination too well. Even so, the Jews who survived Auschwitz and now live in Russia and Poland can hardly be envied. No doubt they should be grateful to Gomulka for not reactivating the death-camps. There is not much more to be grateful for.

Munich may have been an unavoidable tragedy: if so, only because of the negligence of governments and the folly of electors in Britain and France for ten years before it. But a tragedy it was, not only for the Czechs but for half of Europe.

This said, it must also be pointed out that in the years between 1939 and 1945 the British paid their debt to the Czechs, and paid it honourably. In this they were assisted by thousands of Czech soldiers and airmen who gave splendid service in the British forces, and returned to Czechoslovakia only to be persecuted by the new communist masters. Especially dishonest is the Soviet exploitation of Munich. In September 1938 the Soviet government was not put to the test. As France betrayed Czechoslovakia, and the League of Nations did nothing, the *casus foederis* did not arise. The Soviet

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government behaved honourably, but it neither did nor could perform miracles. A year later, when Stalin made his deal with Hitler, the Soviet government recognised the Protectorate in Bohemia-Moravia and the independent Slovak state. But Soviet propaganda for thirty years has used Munich as evidence that the Western Powers are and have always been by their very nature treacherous enemies of the Czech and Slovak peoples, whereas the Soviet Union has shown lasting disinterested friendship.

*Le despotisme âpre et sans gloire  
Sur les peuples découragés  
Ferme la grille épaisse et noire  
Des erreurs et des préjugés.*

WHEN I WAS working in Rumania early in the war, I used to spend a good deal of time in one Bucharest café, where I would read the newspapers and talk politics with different people. Among the café's regular clients were two colonels whom I got to know rather well. Both were exiles from their own countries, unusually capable officers, friends of Britain and men of rather similar liberal views. Colonel Heliodor Pika had been Military Attaché of Czechoslovakia in Bucharest until Hitler marched into Prague. Since then he had placed himself at the disposal of the exiled leadership under Dr. Beneš, and was in close touch with the resistance movement under Nazi occupation. Colonel Euripides Bakirdzis had a distinguished record in the Greek army in the Balkan Wars and First World War, and held a British D.S.O. As a Venizelist, he had been involved in the short civil war of 1935, and could not live in Greece under General Metaxas.

When Rumania became allied to Hitler, Pika went to Turkey. Later he was sent by Beneš to Moscow as head of the Czechoslovak military mission in the Soviet Union. His superior, the Czechoslovak Minister in Moscow, was Zdeněk Fierlinger, originally a social democrat whose main loyalty was now given, not to his country's President, Eduard Beneš, but to the Soviet rulers. Pika resisted all pressure from Fierlinger and from the Soviet soldiers and policemen. He remained faithful to Beneš and the exiled government, reported to them the truth as he saw it, regarded the Soviet Union as his ally but not his master, and also maintained good relations with the representatives in Moscow of his country's other allies, the British and the Americans. Bakirdzis returned to Greece when the Italians invaded, and remained there under the German occupation. He organised one of the first resistance groups, and was in secret communication with the British

in the Middle East. Later, he escaped to Cairo. In 1943, when some leaders of the communist-led resistance movement EAM-ELAS came to Cairo for negotiations with the Allies, Bakirdzis returned with them to Greece. He later became a member of their provisional government in the mountains, though he never joined the Communist Party. When fighting broke out in December 1944 between ELAS and the British army, Bakirdzis was the general in command of the ELAS forces in Macedonia, but he kept them out of the fighting.

Pika, who had been promoted a General, returned to free Czechoslovakia. For two years he held an important post on the General Staff. When the Czechoslovak communists seized power in February 1948, he was arrested. Fierlinger and his Soviet masters took an ignoble revenge: he was accused of treasonable relations with the Western Powers and condemned to death. Bakirdzis returned to civilian life after the armistice agreement which ended the first Greek communist insurrection. But when a right-wing Greek government was elected in 1946, he was arrested and deported to an island. Some time later I heard it reported that he had committed suicide.

THE FATE OF THESE TWO OFFICERS, both essentially victims of judicial murder, illustrates the fate of half Europe in those years. In the early 1950s conditions somewhat improved in Greece, but in the communist countries economic exploitation and political persecution reached their climax. With the advent of John Foster Dulles, the United States began to compete with the Soviet Union in output of false promises and bombastic slogans. Yet there was also hope: the Yugoslavs stood alone and survived, the Berlin airlift worked, Frenchmen and Germans moved towards each other, and there were men in high places who had a vision of a free fraternal Europe.

A few more years, and the picture changed again. In Hungary, the workers, writers and soldiers together overthrew a totalitarian state which a few days before had seemed invincible, and its foreign masters paused in brief hesitation. At this moment, the British and French Prime Ministers launched against Egypt an invasion so devised as to minimise military speed and efficiency and to maximise political odium. While the Presidential election campaign in the United States reached its climax, the British Navy steamed slowly from Malta to Port Said, and the Secretary of State marshalled his great talents for the most effective humiliation of his allies—the Soviet tanks poured back into Budapest. While in England proletarian blimps spat forth in the pubs their futile rage against

the Wogs, and the progressive intelligentsia took out their little anti-imperialist consciences and washed them white as snow on the floor of the House or in the columns of progressive weeklies, in Hungary workers and intellectuals faced the same Soviet hangmen.

Yet, as always happens with time, hopes revived and forces regrouped themselves. This owed little to the deeds or words of Western politicians. The only external force which helped the peoples of Central Europe to revive was the threat of China to the Soviet leaders. The Russians now could no longer give orders: they were obliged to ask politely for support, and to pay a price. The governments recovered sovereignty in their own countries, and most of them sought popularity by treating their subjects with more respect. Each in its own way, and at a different tempo, Rumania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland were re-entering European culture.

IN 1968 AGAIN THE HOPES were crushed. Thanks to the brilliant work of press and television, millions of Europeans shared the anguish, and admired the unity and courage, of Czechs and Slovaks. Never before has a great international tragedy been brought into the homes of so many, and perhaps this will have its effect. Western rulers, however, regarded it all with profound indifference. Some made a few perfunctory gestures. M. Michel Debré and Senator Eugene McCarthy did not even bother to conceal their bored contempt. The American obsession with Viet Nam worked equally against the Czechs and Slovaks from both extremes. One school seemed to hold that some great ideological crusade against "world communism" could by some miracle be won in Viet Nam and nowhere else; the other that, if Ho Chi-minh and Castro approved of the Soviet invasion, then the Czechs deserved whatever fate they got. In France, barely recovered from the virtual disintegration of the summer, the ageing neo-Charlemagne pursued his vendetta with the ghost of Roosevelt, his war against the English language, and his strange vision of some sort of Carolingian Quebec. Germans faced the prospect not only of continued partition but of certain blame, whatever they might do. Konrad Adenauer was blamed for rigidity towards the eastern neighbours: when his successors made friendly gestures towards them, they were accused of sinister subversion. Threatened by the Soviet government, vaguely patronised by the American, despised by the French, exchanging useless platitudes with the British, alarmed for their security yet fearing to be accused of neo-Nazism if they stood up for their interests, they were not to be envied.

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As for the British, their political life dominated by stale and trivial issues, their public opinion divided between bovine xenophobia and querulous self-denigration, they were in no better case.

THAT THE LAST FIFTY YEARS have seen a failure and decline of Europe is a well-worn cliché. What is so alarming is that the knowledge of this tragic process seems to paralyse the will to resist and arrest it. On the one hand there is massive defeatism, a compulsive desire to undermine every loyalty, sneer at every belief and devalue every motive. On the other hand are clouds of perfectionist rhetoric, exhortations to destroy monsters like "world communism" or "neo-colonialism," to achieve world government, to remove at a blow all differences of wealth between nations, to create a multi-racial paradise, or simply to assume on behalf of one's own nation all the guilt for all the crimes and follies of mankind. The sneerers and the myth-makers, the blimps and the masochists have this in common, that their activities combine to drive all realism out of national policy.

Yet world peace still depends on what happens at the centre of Europe. Two world wars took place because this was not understood.

IT IS DIFFICULT to restrain a revulsion of feeling in favour of the Habsburg Monarchy when one remembers the events that followed its downfall. One need only think of the history of Vienna, so long an object of love-hate to its own citizens and to countless foreigners.

My father first saw it at the end of 1905, when German, Slav, and Italian students were shouting each other down in the university; and the socialists led vast, disciplined, peaceful processions of workers through the streets demanding universal suffrage. I knew it, though much less well than he, in the 1930s, and I have been happy there again in the 1960s. It comes to mind in a series of *tableaux historiques*. 1918: two million people haunted by starvation, thousands scouring the countryside to sell precious but useless possessions to impassive peasants for food. February 1934: Dollfuss orders his troops to shell blocks of workers' flats in a civil war which he provoked against the socialists. July 1934: the same Dollfuss bleeds to death in his own office while his Nazi murderers refuse to let him see a priest. March 1938: handsome young Austrian Nazis order elderly Jews to wash the pavements and kick their bottoms as they stoop down, to an accompaniment of jubilant *Sieg Heill* April 1945: the victorious Soviet Army storms through the ruins, demonstrating by its treatment of male and

female civilians the superiority of Soviet socialist over National Socialist culture. November 1956: K-und-K veterans, young countesses, republican bureaucrats, and socialist workers join in exhausting, patient, and effective efforts to help the tens of thousands of Hungarians pouring across the frontier. October 1968: the prosperous city does business as usual, but the tanks are back again, fifty miles to the north this time, and a steady trickle of Czechs and Slovaks comes in, yet another influx of former fellow-citizens from the Monarchy to be cared for.

And of course the same story could be illustrated from other cities—Budapest, Warsaw, and (with fewer material, but not fewer spiritual scars) Prague. Other horrors also spring to mind—the mutual massacres of Serbs, Croats, and Moslems in Bosnia; the cruel persecution of Ukrainians by Poles in Eastern Galicia in 1930 and the deportation of Poles from the same region by Soviet invaders after 1939; the transportation of Jews from northern Transylvania, Ruthenia and Hungary proper to Hitler's death camps at the orders of the Hungarian government in 1944.

All these things resulted from the fall of the Habsburg Monarchy: all would have been inconceivable as long as the Monarchy existed. Its disappearance left a double vacuum. The common culture, hard to define but very real and very pervasive, which had united at least the educated classes of all the nationalities, was fragmented. The military and administrative framework of a Great Power, which had protected all the Monarchy's subjects even if it had often misruled them, was dissolved. Ten nations were delivered up to their quarrels with each other, and then to the appetites of successive totalitarian conquerors from outside.

Yet to judge the events of 1918 with the knowledge of 1968 is to distort their meaning. The truth is that by 1918 the Habsburg Monarchy no longer commanded the loyalty of most of its politically conscious subjects. Admittedly many peasants and soldiers of most of its nationalities remained *kaisertreu*. Even the alienation of the politically conscious had been a long process. The only basis of legitimacy which the Monarchy offered—obedience to the Habsburg dynasty—was perfectly acceptable even in the first half of the 19th century. Until then it did not matter that, in contrast to the countries of Western and Northern Europe, no Austrian nation had been formed. The medieval kings of France never consciously set themselves the task of creating a French nation. But the ruthless suppression of the Albigeois, the taming of Brittany, Burgundy and other provinces, the creation of the centralised French state and the

standardised French language brought about this result. Despite religious and civil strife the French became one nation.

NOTHING SIMILAR OCCURRED in Austria. The Habsburgs never became a national dynasty. Theirs was an universal empire: they were the defenders of the faith against West and East, against the heretics and the Turks. With a different policy, the Austrian lands and Bohemia might have been formed into a centralised state, and a single nation might have arisen, but no attempt was made to do this until the mid-18th century, when it was too late. The growth of cities, industries and new social classes coincided with the diffusion of the idea of nationality. In this new age the appeal to *Kaisertreue* was not a sufficient answer: a dynasty which was bound to rely on landowners, army officers and bureaucratic dignitaries could not extend the basis of its legitimacy by radical social reform.

After 1867 an impossible contradiction set in: a multi-national empire founded on dynastic legitimacy contained within it something which claimed to be a national state. The rulers of this state, historical Hungary, sought to impose the nationality of the Magyar half on the whole of the population. But every one of the non-Magyar nations was attracted to kinsmen who lived along the borders of Hungary and enjoyed greater national liberty, either in independent states or under the rule of Vienna. Inevitably, Serbs and Rumanians became "separatists," and similar trends later gained ground among Slovaks, Croats and Ukrainians.

It is true that, in comparison with modern methods of oppression, the rule of Kálmán or Stephen Tisza was mild. Yet by the more civilised standards of 1900 the arrogance of the leaders, the petty vindictiveness of the officials and the systematic small-scale abuse and perversion of justice by the courts were intolerable.

THESE THINGS EMERGE CLEARLY from my father's diaries and correspondence, the raw material of the books which won him his reputation as a champion of small nations and (undeservedly) as an enemy of the Hungarians. He first went to Hungary in 1906 as an admirer of what he believed to be Hungarian liberalism. What made him change his mind was not so much the arguments of the non-Magyar nationalists as the patent illiberality and dishonesty of Magyar spokesmen, including men of European culture and ostensibly liberal outlook, to whom he had introductions and who received him courteously. One former Minister told him: "We shall just go on until there are no Slovaks left. . . ." This man was in principle in

favour of suffrage reform. My father remarked that "if reform is carried through honestly, the nationalities will have power in their hands." (The non-Magyars formed slightly less than half the population.) The ex-Minister "gave a little laugh, and replied 'Ha! Then we could not have an honest reform.'" A professor who was an expert on the nationalities blandly denied that existing legislation obliged the government to erect secondary schools in areas where non-Magyars formed a majority of the population, and when my father produced the printed text of the law, remarked, "I had forgotten." Conversations with Magyar county judges, and personal observation of electoral corruption and petty victimisation completed my father's disillusionment. About a year after he first entered Hungary, in June 1907, he wrote to a close relative:

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My impressions of Hungary are now less favourable than ever. If I have judged right, their whole political life is corrupt and rotten, and the building of the Magyar hegemony is slowly but surely collapsing. . . . The choice is still there, even at the eleventh hour, but the ruling classes are *far far* too infatuated and too corrupt to choose aright. A clearance must be made within the next two years, or social revolution is bound to come.

Revolution did come, but only after four years of war, and the men of constructive ideas who came to the political surface, some of whom were my father's friends, were swept away first by the communists and then by the counter-revolutionaries, who tried hard, though not entirely successfully, to restore the past. But war had come as a result of an inept foreign policy determined not in Budapest but in Vienna. The Vienna governments treated the nationalities in the western part of the Monarchy much more humanely than did the Hungarian, yet in their different way they were no less incapable of satisfying them. My father put his hopes in Vienna statesmen right up to July 1914, but he was disappointed. By drifting into foreign adventures, the rulers of the Monarchy brought down disaster not only on themselves but on the whole of Europe.

By the beginning of the 20th century ten nations in Central Europe were growing up or had grown up. The tutelage of an elderly relative, even if he had great past merits, and still showed occasional charm, was something they could stand no longer. The time had come for them to live their own way, make their own mistakes and develop their own society and culture. Though they have had bad leaders and false prophets in abundance, they have fulfilled much of their promise. I at least remain convinced fifty years later that the admittedly great loss from the fall of the Monarchy was more than compensated by the release of new energies, talents and hopes. The Czechs and Slovaks have shown their quality to the world, and so did the Hungarians twelve years ago.

WHEN I REMEMBER what my Rumanian and Yugoslav friends have endured, and how they have emerged from it, and especially when I think of some of their grown-up children and their children's friends, I cannot but be moved by hope. Nor, when I think of the Central European peoples, can I forget the exiles, most of whom undoubtedly still belong to their nations. It has become a fashion among some of our scribes to sneer at "professional *émigrés*." (Presumably the exiles got themselves driven out of their countries in order to make a good thing out of it?) Of course they are

fully entitled to dissociate themselves from the exiles, with the same feelings as one of their distant predecessors who thanked God that he was not as other men. No doubt the exiles have their share of publicans and sinners. Yet today, not for the first time, it is only in exile that the honour of Poland is publicly upheld; and one day Hungary will be able to acknowledge its debt to its diaspora, from my father's friend the great Oszkár Jászi to the younger exiled writers of today. The struggles and frustrations of these men will not be forgotten.

IT IS STILL possible to look with confidence to the future of the nations of Central Europe. But fifty years after the fall of the Monarchy they live in the shadow of a Power very different from the Habsburgs. This Power is alien not only to the culture of the Danube valley, but to all European culture, including that which it inherited from Imperial Russia and trampled under foot. In place of an antiquated dynastic hierarchy, upheld by supercilious noblemen and bumbling *Hofräte*, we have a militant pseudocracy, served by a multitude of indefatigable hypocrites, braggarts and bullies. While the nationalist élites of fifty years ago fought the Monarchy, they also had reason to respect its institutions and they absorbed much of its culture. Today, from Esthonia to Bulgaria and from Bohemia to the Ukraine the attitude of élites and peoples to the Soviet Union is simple: they hate the rulers, despise the officials and pity the Russian people. There is one reason only for the ritual polite noises that are regularly made by Central European spokesmen: fear. The Soviet Union has no policies, no culture, no morality to offer the Central Europeans. Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary, Rumania and Czechoslovakia have rejected it in turn. Two have been brought back into subjection by force, one has slid back through the ineptitude of its ruling clique, and two are in danger. The fact remains that the only answers of the Soviet rulers to the problems of the modern world are more missiles, more armoured divisions, more security policemen and more press censors.

The barbarians still have plenty of all four. Yet the 20th century has seen the collapse of too many empires to permit much confidence in the durability of the Muscovite one. Its best hope lies not in the support of its subjects, who are less and less deceived by its lies, nor even in its military strength, but in the weakness, indifference, and hysteria of the nations of Western Europe. Yet if these have the will, they still have the means to prevent their own enslavement or destruction.

# POINTS OF THE COMPASS

*Letter from Italy*

## On the Locomotive

*By Luigi Barzini*

WHY HAVE the Communists not yet come to power in Italy? Will they do so and, if they do, when (in the indeterminate future, after the next elections in 1973, next autumn, or next month, and how (violently, surreptitiously, or legally)? Is there any organisation or institution left in the country powerful and respected enough to cope with them? What can still be tried, which has not been tried before, to ward off their final triumph, or possibly to attenuate its disagreeable consequences? These questions have once again become as pressing as they were twenty odd years ago, just after the War and before the 1948 elections when the Party suffered a great if temporary setback.

This may be surprising to foreign observers, who know that so many things have happened which should have long ago exorcised the spectre haunting Italy. Tito, who represented an armed threat on the Eastern border, is no longer a Moscow vassal but a friendly neutral; Stalin and Palmiro Togliatti have died; Marxist republics and Communist parties everywhere are torn by doubts and discontent; the class struggle has been transformed into a mannered joust by affluence, a flood of home appliances, and cheap

automobiles; Italy, which lay prostrate, ruined, starving, and hopeless, is now a prosperous industrialised country holding its own among the best. Why should a Communist victory still seem so probable and the danger so frightening?

The reasons, of course, are many and complex. Perhaps one of the decisive ones is that, for twenty odd years, all vital political decisions were distorted by the dramatic necessity to prevent an imminent Communist takeover by all means available. This obsessed Italian voters, Roman party leaders, the Catholic Church, the U.S. State Department, and it inevitably justified a number of ambiguous and ingenious stratagems and subterfuges, the launching of wasteful and demagogic projects, the ruthless manipulation of news, the hushing up of all scandals involving parties in power, the formation of unnatural and inefficient coalitions. Parties pursued the public interest only incidentally; most of the time they exerted themselves to build up their own financial and political power, and their electoral following, often by dubious means, in order to cope with the Communist menace.

They necessarily postponed the solutions of many fundamental problems, which were not commonly judged of primary importance in the struggle against the Marxist-Leninists. Good things were done at the same time, to be sure, some of them important; but many more were left undone. (The country, to mention one, is *still* awkwardly ruled by the Fascist penal code!) As a result, the political situation has deteriorated, and the bitter discontent of the lower classes, which feeds the expansive power of the Party, increased steadily as the years went by, instead of diminishing. The economic boom, which many thought would do the trick, did not help. It is commonplace that unrest often grows with industrial development, and that the majority of workers entertain dreams of revolution not when they suffer privations but when their living conditions improve and their expectations rise.

THE ITALIAN SITUATION is not, as many think, merely a marginal and picturesque one. It may be worth paying some attention to. The consequences of the deterioration and possible failure of the liberal and democratic parties could be calamitous, not only for the future of the country itself, but also for the balance of power which is now precariously assuring the peace of the world. Italy has a unique geographic position that would be important even if it were uninhabited. The Po valley is a glacis between East and West; the rest of the peninsula a mole dominating vital communications in the Mediterranean. Most of the wars for the control of the world

LUIGI BARZINI'S controversial book on The Italians appeared first in English in 1964 (Atheneum, New York; Hamish Hamilton, London) and subsequently—with some trepidation on the part of author and publisher—in Italy. Among his articles in *ENCOUNTER* are "The Difference in the South" (June 1962), "Benito Mussolini" (July 1964), "The Peaceful Invasion" (August 1964), "The Anatomy of Expertise" (January 1968).

were decided by naval battles in this general area: Actium, Lepanto, Aboukir, Trafalgar, and Cape Matapan, among others.

That politics in Italy can be dangerous for all is a well known fact among specialists. It was "to prevent a Bolshevik victory" that young Italians marched on Rome in 1922. They thought that they too could save Italy not by seriously tackling all the problems but by the use of arbitrary power, intimidation, and subterfuges, more in the style of the Mafia than the rule of law; they set up an oppressive and inefficient régime buttressed by police and propaganda, and spread a smokescreen of rhetoric over their failings. In the end, they helped provoke the Second World War which left their country a mass of rubble. The Italian Communist Party emerged as the largest in Europe, outside the Soviet Union, and the wisest of all. One is tempted to conclude from past experience that, for the safety of the rest of the world, the only way the Italians should follow to defeat Communism is a simple one—to govern as well and honestly as possible, taking on all the real problems, and to placate the people's discontent by trying to give them the efficient institutions necessary in a modern land. This has never been tried. Everything else, no matter how alluring, is to be considered a dangerous panacea which makes matters worse: a charlatan's nostrum.

THAT "NOTHING" WILL PREVENT Italy from becoming a Marxist Republic one day soon, firmly ruled by a proletarian dictatorship, is an article of faith only among millions of Communist rank-and-file members and their associated voters. (Many hold expensive Party bond issues which will be "redeemed after the final victory over the forces of imperialism and reaction.") The cadres are more prudent and less sanguine. They soberly deduce from the reality surrounding them that a serious breakdown of the State machinery is to be expected sooner or later, and they believe that the parties in power are too weak, befuddled, demoralised, tired, and paralysed by internal squabbles, to face the coming emergency. They concede that their Party will almost inevitably be entrusted with a vital role, whether it wants it or not, as it is the second largest party and the only coherent political force of the Left with the necessary discipline, doctrine, experience, and authority. They will not shirk their responsibilities, when the time comes, and will do their duty.

What will their role be exactly? Here they are in a quandary.

Will the Party come to *de facto* forms of collaboration with the government? Or, to save itself from the general wreckage, must it face the

inevitability of armed revolution? Can a civil war be avoided? What will the Western Allies do? And, in case of victory, what shape will Marxism-Leninism *all'italiana* assume? Many expect to be truly unorthodox, as they have timidly proclaimed themselves in print, but are they "unorthodox" enough to forgo the advantages of a one-party police state once they are in charge? The old handbooks on how to make a revolution and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat are all obsolete. They became useless after Czechoslovakia. All this is complicated by the fact that international Communism is tortured by a vast schismatic struggle, and by the sporadic warfare between the two greatest Marxist empires. The Italian Party itself is in a crisis: it has changed from the simple and ruthless organisation of the Bolshevik fathers to the subtle, Machiavellian and Italianised (but just as ruthless) organisation of the sons. Furthermore, the prodigious economic boom in Italy made the radical reappraisal of traditional positions inevitable. Will today's well-fed workers follow as easily as the starving unemployed did? The old Stalinist élite is decrepit, and the young are uncertain. Many of them have become accustomed (and some are also secretly fond of) the prestige and bourgeois liberties enjoyed by eloquent revolutionaries in Western democracies. What will they do? Can they really take power?

### *Togliatti Reconsidered*

THE PARTY is still conditioned by the Togliatti inheritance. It was Togliatti himself who prevented the Communists from taking power in the years immediately following the liberation, when they could have done so by merely giving a few orders. The Allied armies had vanished; the government was disarmed and impotent; the middle class was terrorised and divided; the country was in turmoil; the economy in ruins; the people (accustomed to authoritarian rule) were desperate and hungry. The Party was rich, powerful, disciplined, and still controlled a secret and well-oiled military machine. It had an immense following of fanatic and impatient chiliasts. In the government until 1947, it infiltrated loyal men in key positions at all levels: in the bureaucracy, armed forces, railways, telegraphs, telephones, radio, and many vital industries. Even the switchboards of several Ministries were in its hands. The rank-and-file pleaded with Togliatti: "*Quando si smura?*" (or "When do we break down the walls behind which our weapons are stored?"). It was Togliatti alone who did not believe the moment had come. He once explained his point of view in these words:

The British and the Americans had no intention of allowing the Italians to decide their own future and could not allow a definitive blow to be struck against the old capitalistic system. We were all seriously engaged merely to secure a minimum of autonomy for Italy. The recognition of Italian independence would have been withdrawn at the first signs of an ascendancy of the workers' parties and, more especially, if the Communist Party appeared to triumph, ready to eliminate the reactionary classes. A period of enslavement could then be considered inevitable for the country, a semi-colonial period under foreign control, which would have driven the workers' movement underground...<sup>1</sup>

Many now consider his fears excessive in retrospect, *i.e.* not thoroughly based on the sober valuation of realities which Marx recommends. For one thing, he attributed to the British and Americans the kind of logic, clarity and iron determination which Marxists always attribute to their satanic class enemy. His thinking was possibly also distorted by a subconscious need to hide his personal temperament behind intricate political justifications. He was no hot-blooded revolutionary. He personally disliked violence, massacres, and mass deportations, although he had to tolerate such things all his life. They were a disagreeable aspect of his job. He was by nature a gentle philosopher, known in his old Comintern days as a man who could always write a subtle thesis proving anything at all or its contrary, whatever in fact the leaders needed to prove. Stalin nicknamed him "The Professor." His own personal inclinations, his compulsive love of tidiness and thrift, made him prefer a gradual and well directed transformation of society to convulsive, haphazard, and wasteful revolts, whose results could never be determined beforehand. (He was suspected at one time of being a deviationist of the right, a "Bukharinist.") In the memorandum he wrote in the U.S.S.R. a few days before his death at Yalta in 1964 (the document which is now officially considered his "political testament"),<sup>2</sup> he clarified his preoccupations:

Deeply reflecting on the theme of the possibility of constructing socialism by peaceful means, we come to the necessity of defining exactly what we mean by democracy in a bourgeois State, determining how we can help to enlarge the frontiers of liberty and democratic institutions,

and deciding what forms the participation of the working masses in the economic and political life of the country can take which will be most efficacious. The question arises whether it is possible to conquer positions of power within the constraints of a bourgeois State which has not changed its nature and to provoke progressive transformations of the institutions from the inside, so to speak...

In other words he did not exclude the usefulness of a violent *coup d'état*, and could not easily reject the theoretical necessity of revolutions, which would quickly eliminate the bourgeoisie both politically and physically from the scene. But he was tempted to believe (though he never said so officially) that "bourgeois liberties" could be considered a conquest of all men for all times and not of a single class, and that not only they could be made use of by the workers to take power painlessly, but should be respected and preserved by them. His last words contained a subversive charge (with delayed detonation devices) which endangered the orthodoxy and monolithism of the international Communist movement.

He worked to make his Party what he needed for the job as he saw it. He had to cope with Electoral Defeat (1948) and Cold War. First of all, he eliminated many illiterate fanatics and terrorists from responsible positions, men who had emerged from Fascist jails, the underground, and the resistance; and he disbanded all clandestine armed organisations, probably leading the police to discover many (though not all) caches of weapons. He built up an élite of intellectuals in his own image, pale men, Left Hegelians, Marxist-Leninist theologians, who usually wore glasses, thought intricately, studied history and sociology, and delivered speeches lasting half a day.

He revised the Party line, trying to hide (but not contradict) some of the harshest and most embarrassing Soviet theses under elegant euphemisms. (When I asked him once how one could believe improbable lies, like the charge that Beria was in the pay of Western Intelligence Services, he said: "Such things have to be interpreted like rhetorical figures. Beria behaved as if he was an agent of the Intelligence Service, did he not? Therefore one could say, for short, that he *was* an agent of the Intelligence Service.") He stopped all anti-clerical propaganda (power cannot be achieved in Italy without coming to some understanding with the Church). Above all, he tried to pacify the bourgeoisie by attenuating the terrifying image of the blood-thirsty Communist, ready to deport and exterminate *en masse* all political opponents. (This aim, of course, he never fully managed to achieve, both because the hard core of the

<sup>1</sup> *Conversando con Togliatti*, by Marcella and Maurizio Ferrara (Edizioni di Cultura Sociale, Rome, 1953), p. 361.

<sup>2</sup> See Ignazio Silone "On the Italian Left (Togliatti's Testament)," *ENCOUNTER*, March 1965, pp. 65-67.

Party still cherished such hopes, and because the fear of Communism was indispensable to the Christian Democrats who would have seen their votes dwindle dangerously the moment the middle class stopped being frightened.)

He was accused of following strict orders from Moscow. This was only partly true. To be sure, in 1947-8, Moscow believed that the world had been divided at Yalta once and for all between two spheres of influence; that the Americans would surely go to war to prevent any part of their sphere from slipping into the Marxist camp; and that this was a serious matter, as the U.S.A. then possessed the only atomic bombs in existence. Therefore his Party was allowed all kinds of subversive activities but one. It could not start a revolution and could not take advantage of historic circumstances, no matter how favourable, to take power illegally. Its main task was the defence of the interests of the Soviet Union. This he did, strenuously attacking UNRRA, the Marshall Plan, the Atlantic Alliance, and the European Economic Community among others.

He repeatedly promised the neutrality of the Communist Party in internal affairs and its active collaboration with a bourgeois government ("any bourgeois government," he daringly specified at one time) which would take Italy away from the imperialist camp. Serving as he did Soviet interests, he was not moved by vulgar servility. There were always theoretical reasons for placing the interests of the U.S.S.R. almost scandalously ahead of the prosperity and welfare of Italian workers. As Togliatti explained it, the U.S.S.R. *was* the proletarian revolution; the Italian Party was strong, and able, eventually, to promote the progress of the workers and build an Italian Marxist State only if it acted for the time being as an *instrumentum* of Soviet power.

He could not be said to obey the orders from the Kremlin also because he himself wrote the Kremlin orders. He had long ago defined the need to collaborate with democratic parties; formulated, with Dimitroff, the "Popular Front" theory in 1934; applied it for years and especially during the War, when he worked together with Italian anti-Fascist bourgeois parties and King Victor Emmanuel. He disapproved of Tito, who had stubbornly followed a contrary policy and had exterminated the Monarchists who had fought the Germans in the underground. After the death of Stalin, Togliatti was one of a handful of survivors of the Comintern of the 1920s, the most authoritative non-Russian theoretician left, whose opinions determined the official line. He was the man who formulated the policy guiding all Parties in the West, including his own.

THE TOGLIATTI FORMULA was successful. The Party became the most efficient and reliable workers' party in Italy, at an historical moment when the workers evidently needed one. It runs the important trade unions and helps promote a few reforms, not too effectively, of course, as its power depends on the workers' discontent). It worries the middle class, the industrialists, the land owners, the Church, and the State Department. It is the loving foster-mother of many intellectuals of all colours, who find peace, prizes, and protection in its embrace. As an autonomous Italian socialist party it could not help disagreeing at times with the official Moscow line. It dislikes too strict control of the arts and sciences, disapproves outright excommunication of the Chinese, and now mildly objects to the theory that orthodox Marxist armies must invade Marxist countries whenever these try to liberalise their régimes (though it whole-heartedly approved of the intervention in Hungary in 1956).

On the whole, however, in almost fifty years, it has acted as a faithful tool of Soviet policy on all important occasions. This has never diminished its prestige. On the contrary, its power as an Italian workers' party is enhanced by the fact that it is supported by Moscow. At the same time, it could not be supported by Moscow (and render Moscow effective services in Italy) if it were not, first of all, the best socialist party in Italy, with deep roots in the century-old local history, attuned to the national character and prejudices, able to express a few rare dissenting opinions.

Three sociological strata can be distinguished in it. The *élite* is a self-perpetuating group of able and pliant philosophers. Under them are the organisers, the Party members, the hardcore militants, many of whom are still waiting for the revolution. Below these are the voters, millions of them, who know practically nothing of Marxism but are vaguely attracted by what they know as the poor people's natural party. The structure is centralised but, within the limitations of a Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist party, relatively liberal. Opponents and critics of the official line, men who represent the diverging tendencies of the revolutionaries (left) and of the voters (right), are allowed to voice mildly dissenting views, mostly on matters of tactics rather than principle, as long as they are solidly backed by sacred texts. Dissidents are not permitted, however, to found movements or "*correnti*" of their own and print their own publications. In the end everybody always does with discipline what the leaders decide, according to the rules of so-called "democratic centralism."

Dissatisfied Communists point out that the Togliatti formula has allowed the card-holding

militants to dwindle from 2½ millions after the war to 1½ million now. But the leaders are satisfied with the steady increase in voting strength. The Party, allied to the Socialists, elected 183 deputies in 1948 (30.97% of the total); alone, it won 143 seats in 1953 (22.70%); 140 in 1958 (22.68%); 166 in 1963 (25.2%); and 177 in 1968 (26.9%). In other words the revolutionary stratum is getting thinner while the local workers' party has been growing steadily since 1948. The massive presence of representatives in both Chambers, aided by their extreme Left allies, is not unimportant. It has always allowed them to influence one way or another all political decisions. Timid government coalitions, frightened by possible disorders in the streets and the factories as well as stubborn opposition in Parliament, steer clear of excessively controversial measures which might provoke the extreme Left's bristling opposition.

This has aided some of the ruling parties in their reluctance to tackle really fundamental problems. The increase in voting strength is pursued also for precise strategic reasons. Antonio Gramsci (erroneously called the founder of the Party, really its first outstanding thinker) pointed out long ago that the Communists could not hope to take power in Italy by themselves, except in very exceptional circumstances, as the revolutionary Left is always sociologically limited to a few intellectuals and a small fringe of fanatical followers. They usually manage to instigate violent counter-reactions, coalesce disparate and contrasting forces against them, and at best succeed in provoking the formation of "strong governments" in the "defence of national interests." Therefore they must try to attract moderate allies by pursuing moderate but intelligently graduated aims. Among the moderate allies not to be irritated for the time being in Italy are the revolutionary socialists, the social democrats, the more democratic bourgeois and the left-wing of the Catholic movement.

### *The Centre-Left*

THOUGHTFUL OBSERVERS of the Italian scene began to believe in the 1950s that the only easy way to enfeeble the Communists was to free their principal ally, the Socialist Party led by Pietro Nenni, from their embrace. In 1958 it had won 4,206,726 votes (or 14.3% of the total) and 84 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. The Nenni Socialists had been disciplined and reliable vassals for years (even before the War), and this not entirely for reasons of convenience and prudence, as many insinuated, but also because they feared that "a split in the working-class parties" might once again confer a decisive

advantage to the Right. After the War they duly signed all the Communist manifestos, took part in all demonstrations, riots, and strikes, served as auxiliaries in the Communists' trade unions, and voted with them on all important issues. They represented a conspicuous, if not decisive, arithmetical component of Left opposition.

As the War paled in men's memories, the country was reconstructed, the economy somehow managed to become one of the most modern, vigorous, competitive, and fastest expanding in the West, and the menace of an imminent Communist apocalypse waned, the Nenni men began to have misgivings. Many remembered they had always been democrats and fighters for liberty and that they had never entirely shared the authoritarian concepts of the Stalinist Communist Party. They found themselves in 1956 on the side of the Hungarian rebels against the Soviet tanks. Pietro Nenni was among them.

These men tended to agree more and more with the views of the Social Democrats who, led by Giuseppe Saragat, had broken away from the mother party in 1947 on the Communist issue. They had not wanted to be accomplices in the formation of another totalitarian dictatorship, no matter how nobly justified. The Social Democrats were part of the coalition with the Liberals, the Republicans, and the Christian Democrats, with a majority of but a few votes, which helped govern the country in the twelve years in which Italy emerged from her ashes, signed and ratified the Atlantic Pact, and helped form the European Economic Community. A reunification of the two Socialist Parties was looked upon with favour by the two ageing leaders, both of whom wanted to be at rest with their consciences. Nenni refused to be any longer a brother-in-arms of the Communists; Saragat had never got over the remorse of having "divided the working class," an unforgivable sin (to which, incidentally, Italian Socialists are prone and have succumbed numberless times in the past eighty years).

The reunification of the two splinters was considered by all the really crucial move. It would give the new Centre-Left government a large and stable majority in Parliament, and make the coalition truly irreversible, as there was no longer a spare majority for the Christian Democrats to turn to in case of failure. This gave confidence to the Socialists, who thought they would be able to impose their will on the Christian Democrats, under the threat of the only alternative: new elections.

It was not an easy operation to unify the Socialists and lead them to a coalition with the Catholics. Nenni feared that too many of his

followers, many of whom were primitive and emotional socialists, would not understand it and would once again split the Party. In spite of his precautions, many in fact broke away and founded a splinter formation, the PSIUP (or *Partito Socialista di Unità Proletaria*), which adequately filled the empty space at the side of the Communists.

The Republicans, led by Ugo La Malfa, a tiny middle-class formation with a glorious past, believed that a Centre-Left coalition would have the power and the clear ideas necessary to tackle the one problem whose solution was, as we know, the only effective anti-Communist operation: the reconstruction, modernisation, and moral reform of the State machinery. La Malfa hoped that the new government would follow his advice and bridge the abyss between the industrialised *pays réel* and the archaic and decaying *pays officiel*. Like many others, he thought the preceding governments' reluctance to improve the efficiency of the administration was the fault of the Liberals alone.

The Christian Democrats, who even if they deny it, undoubtedly are the secular arm of the Church, had more complex ideas. The Centre-Left coalition was promoted by the Vatican partly for the hopes shared by Saragat, Nenni, and La Malfa, but also for reasons of its own. It was thought that an alliance with a proletarian party would help free the Church from the stigma of being a staunch supporter of Cold-War anti-Communism, the defender of private property and a capitalist market economy, charges which had weakened its hold on Italian, and other Western workers and had made relations with the régimes in Eastern Europe extremely difficult. In other words, the Church was not solely thinking in terms of the welfare of Italy (which is only incidentally its preoccupation), but of millions of Catholics beyond the Adriatic and the Elbe, in Yugoslavia, Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, who urgently needed aid and protection. It knew that without the tolerance of local governments, Eastern Catholics would be driven underground and, before long, reduced to a heroic minority of saints and martyrs. To be sure, the new orientation would have to be carried out in agreement and with the consent of the American Catholics who were the main source of financial and political power for the Church.

The design, of course, met with enthusiastic transatlantic approval. It was supported by enlightened Italians the Americans trusted for reasons that were almost too easy to understand. It was irresistible as it looked on paper to be the definitive, simple, clear-cut surgical operation that would settle the matter once and for all. The

State Department saw it as the local application of a formula they had encouraged (or were intending to encourage) in other countries: the formation of an alliance between progressive Catholics and anti-Communist (or non-Communist) parties of the Left. The men in charge unfortunately overlooked two elements which made the Italian situation dissimilar from that in other countries. (1) There is no Italian Catholic Church led by an Italian Primate. (2) Italian Socialists are different from Socialists almost anywhere else in Europe.

NATIONAL CHURCHES exist, of course, in all Catholic countries. Often, in times of trouble, they face foreign oppressors or internal menaces, heroically identifying themselves with the soul of their nation. Local Primates have been known proudly to defy the Vatican itself, when the ultramontane views appeared to endanger the moral and spiritual well-being of their flock. The only Church existing in Italy is the Universal Church. Its primary duty is—rightly, I think—the defence and promotion of its universal mission. The Primate of Italy is the Pope. This has always made the Church more vulnerable to hostile mass movements which endanger social peace in Italy, and often more eager than necessary to come to an agreement with them.

The peculiar quality of Italian Socialists is due to the fact that they are 19th-century Romantics. They have always been agitating wildly in the opposition, have practically no experience of administration or government, and tend to lose the support of their voters (and break up) whenever they try to collaborate with the Church or the class enemies. To be sure, some leaders are as contemporary, well-read, and able as other European Socialists, but they have no decisive weight in their Party. The best are seldom re-elected.

In spite of these points, the State Department (and other U.S. organisations) worked hard to bring about the desired coalition. How hard, how long, how subtly, by what visible and invisible means, they did it, will be known for sure years from now when the relevant documents are published. A few pages in recent books of memoirs, scraps of information published in remote magazines, a few leaks and unreliable rumours only allow us to have a vague idea of the extent and the cost of the operation (doubtless one of the most ambitious ever carried out outside Latin America). Among its results is surely not an increase of American popularity among Italians, a few of whom remember that their country was kept in subjection for centuries, after the Counter-Reformation, by a comparable alliance of Church and Empire.

The operation was naturally welcomed and aided by the British Labour Party and by big



business, privately owned big business in Italy and the West, and Italy's large nationalised concerns. It pleased the technocrats everywhere. It was strongly supported by *The New York Times*, the *Financial Times*, the *Economist*, the *Observer*, among others, and (obviously) the *Osservatore Romano*. In Italy it was vigorously promoted by *La Stampa* (owned by Fiat) and *Il Giorno* (owned, at the time, by ENI, the State petroleum concern). Foreign observers could not be blamed for thinking there was no other easy alternative. The lay Italian parties were too small and too weak to play a decisive role. It would have taken many years to build them up. Was the operation not designed to weaken the Communists, these foreigners asked themselves, acquire the goodwill of a substantial part of the proletariat, assure the solid majority necessary to pass much overdue legislation, guarantee social stability for the time being, promote further economic and social development, encourage foreign investments? Could anything else be tried that would produce such results?

ALMOST NONE OF THESE THINGS turned out as hoped. The newly formed *Partito Socialista di Unità Proletaria* became, as Nenni feared, an important and energetic ally of the Communists, and a handy receptacle for all kinds of Left-wing deviationists who could disturb the harmony and discipline of the orthodox Communist Party. The *PSIUP* won 23 seats in the 1968 elections and shows signs of gaining more. The Communist Party itself does not seem to be withering away. It gains approximately one million more votes every time the Italians go to the polls, and sees its power and influence grow in every field, in spite of its own internal crisis and that of the world Communist movement. The unified Socialist Party in the government coalition lost votes in the 1968 elections and is now tortured by dissensions and polemics.

Little of the urgently needed legislation was proposed or passed. Schools, courts, hospitals, public housing, and the State social security organisations go on deteriorating at a quicker rate than before. Social stability was not assured. Unrest is growing. Workers, students, professors, doctors, State employees, housewives, old people living on miserable pensions, take part in continuous demonstrations, strikes, the occupation of public buildings, asking for higher wages, pensions, better living conditions, re-organisation of offices, modern laws, or the end of the Viet Nam war. Everybody knows the government tackles only those problems whose urgency is advertised by means of riots. The abyss between the industrialised *pays réel* and the archaic *pays officiel* grows deeper and more unbrid

There are, to be sure, many bright spots. Industrial production rises steadily; the lira is stable; exports to the Common Market and elsewhere in the world are growing. Millions of tourists leave millions of dollars behind them every year. The people are lively, energetic, industrious.

On closer examination, however, even in the economy there are a few disquieting features. The growth in industrial production is not matched by a proportionate increase in employment. The number of employed workers decreased by 190,000 in 1968. New investments are lagging. The stock exchanges are deserted. Capital seeks more secure and remunerative prospects abroad, and couriers cross the Swiss border carrying valises filled with banknotes.

People who still save money are intimidated by imprudent speeches made by Cabinet ministers, ill conceived laws (many of which, like the nationalisation of electric industry, would have been extremely useful to the country's economy if more carefully thought out), or the threat of future punitive laws which may never be passed. Local consumption is still low, lower than the economy should permit or encourage. Industries seek American partners, to acquire new capital, to be sure, and to modernise their plants with transatlantic know-how, but also to find some protection from their own government under the Stars & Stripes. In other words, private Italy is still progressing vigorously (for the time being) in spite of public Italy, but not as vigorously as in the '50s.

That the Italians flourish in spite of bad governments has always been true, to some extent, in a country where the inhabitants, under foreign oppressors and inefficient rulers, had to develop private virtues and public vices to defend themselves. Business men instinctively prefer a paralytic government to one that would promote immature and dangerous reforms. The grand hope always was that the national habits would gradually dissolve the moment a more modern and farther-looking government would for once, try to help the people instead of hindering them.

The causes of the government's paralysis are not lack of ideas, goodwill, or good men in the Cabinet. Neglected problems have by now become so entangled that they can no longer be solved simply by a few ingenious laws (even if such laws could be agreed upon, formulated, passed by Parliament, and enforced); other causes are built-in in the Centre-Left coalition itself. Most important reforms are bogged down, because the Christian Democrats cannot agree with the Socialists and the Socialists cannot always agree with themselves. The fundamental



point is that the State administration is too inefficient (and the laws governing it too obsolete) for *any* political action to produce any desirable effect.

The State cannot be reformed because the parties in power have too divergent views of what a modern State organisation should look like. The Socialists dream of a vast variety of ideal prototypes, ranging from extremist, utopian, Left-of-Lenin models, to moderate British-type or Scandinavian models. They are, however, embarrassed in their decisions by the aggressive competition of the Communists, who take voters away from them by accusing them consistently of "selling out the proletariat" to the bourgeoisie. They therefore have to support vociferously the most drastic punitive solutions, to carry on the class-war, even when the majority would be ready quietly to accept realistic proposals. On the other hand, their persistent extremism spreads fear among the middle-class who vote increasingly for the Christian Democrats, in order to give them the necessary force to cope with such uncomfortable allies. The Socialists, therefore, are bound to go on losing one way or the other, whatever they do.

The Christian Democrats should profit by the Socialists' weakness and successfully promote the particular reforms dear to their hearts: the reforms needed for the gradual construction of a model Christian Democracy. Unfortunately, there is no such model. They cannot agree among themselves what it should look like because theirs is not a European, or ideologically homogeneous, party, but a patchwork coalition of practically all the principal social, cultural, economic and political ideas existing in Italy. The membership ranges from the extreme Right (the authoritarian champions of archaic privileges, the enemies of a civil divorce law), to the Centre (the *Dorotei*, who promote a society manoeuvred from above by technocrats), and the extreme Left fringe (quasi-Communist Catholics). All these men are kept together not by a political idea but by the exercise of power, ecclesiastical interests, and religious faith. The only orthodoxy enforced among them, the only set of beliefs they all uniformly must share without deviations, is the Athanasian Creed.

Most of them were formed by Catholic schools and universities during the decades when the State was the opponent of the Vatican's temporal pretensions. They were imbued not only with the Church's century-old mistrust of lay laws and authorities but by its bitter defiance of the Italian State. Almost all of them, Right, Centre, Left, think any State, even one created *ex novo* and run by them, can but be a frail human construction, reflecting transient ideals,

beset by temptation and doomed to decay. They therefore watch the administration break down without surprise—and without doing much to repair the damage and retard its final collapse. They think nothing can really be done, man is what he is (and the Italian man is more man than others), the country has always known bad governments, and perfection is only to be found in Heaven. In fact the Christian Democratic Party flourishes in the prevailing disorder and corruption. It is indirectly financed out of public funds, finds jobs for its *clientes* in the bureaucracy, awards public-works contracts to its loyal friends, and entrusts nationalised industries solely to its own men. In sum, the best of them cannot shed their old prejudices, even now that they are in power, and cannot remember that the institutions are now also the defence of their own and the Church's liberties.

The situation is so bad that the Communists themselves are upset. Communist Deputy Ugo Bartesaghi expressed their misgivings in a recent speech in Parliament:

The country will revolt on account of the things you are not capable of doing, all the problems you cannot solve. . . . There is no other alternative to your impotence than rebellion, a rebellion which will take place whether we [the Communists] want it or not, a chaotic, disorderly, violent revolution, for which you alone will be responsible!

### *A Reversal, "con garbo"?*

A GROWING NUMBER OF Christian Democrats and Socialists are beginning to think that (according to the old political rule) the only way out and the only hope is an agreement with the Communists. Ambiguous speeches are being made more and more often by authoritative leaders of both government parties, cautiously exploring this possibility. One of them, the best known, Christian Democrat Aldo Moro, ex-prime minister, is now officially considered the future leader of a pro-Communist (or non-anti-Communist) government. Another, Luigi Bertoldi, deputy secretary of the Socialist Party, recently said: "We do not consider including the Communists in a government coalition. This they would refuse as a bad bargain. We aim, instead, to accept the reality of their existence and their power in the country and in Parliament." The deputy Prime Minister, Francesco de Martino (a socialist), does not hide his desire to collaborate with the Communists in all those projects in which the Christian Democrats might drag their feet.

To be sure, the citizens who voted for the Christian Democrats and the Socialists, thinking these two parties would defend them from revolution and a Communist take-over, would be

astounded and frightened by a sudden and radical reversal. The State Department and the NATO powers would equally look dimly upon a change of fronts; the Catholic masses in the United States would consider it a betrayal of their trust in the Vatican. The operation will have to be done (if at all) very very gently, *con garbo*. In the beginning the Communists will have to keep their place in the Opposition and play their part. Harsh polemics, violent accusations, and endless controversies should go on as if everything was normal. But, at the same time, under-the-counter *ad hoc* deals could be arranged (as de Martino suggested) on specific problems for the time being and, later on, on more important general questions.

Obviously, the men who want to come to an understanding with the Communist Party, and to govern the country with its help and connivance, are following a logical line. If an alliance between the Socialists and the Christian Democrats was considered necessary for various reasons, an eventual alliance with the Communists would be even more so for all the same reasons (except one, the defence against Communism). In fact, most of the promises of the Centre-Left could only be fulfilled by the Communist Party. It alone has the power to give stability to a government; ensure peace and order in the streets, the factories, and Parliament; keep the students studying quietly; keep the workers contented with reasonable wages; and help to transform Italy eventually into a quasi-socialist State, where the Church would find ample protection for her activities, Italians keep their big mouths shut, and nationalised industries develop without hindrance, or excessive controls.

THE DIFFICULTY, of course, is in the price to be paid. Obviously, the Communists would want what they have always demanded: a gradual neutralisation of Italy, its eventual withdrawal from the Atlantic Pact, the departure from Italian soil of all foreign armed forces, air and naval bases, and atomic weaponry. But this is not an imminent matter. For the time being what is envisaged is the temporary purchase of benevolence and a relaxation of tension. The price can be fixed on each occasion: the passing of laws which the Communists might want, for reasons of their own, like the division of Italy into autonomous regions (some of the key ones will be dominated by them); the election of Communists to the European Parliament in Strasbourg; or disarming the police. Some of these things are already being done, anyway. More will follow gradually.

The Communists are clearly fascinated by all this, but are apprehensive and nervous. To be

sure, they are willing to collaborate now and again on particular reforms, chosen by them, which would facilitate their activities. They know that the repeated appeals to them by majority leaders enfeeble the government and strengthen the Party; but they also know that any form of open collaboration or connivance with the Christian Democrats and the Socialists is looked upon with horror by the rank-and-file. The leaders know they thrived, like the Christian Democrats, for more than two decades, on anti-Communism. It was precisely the fact that they were feared and opposed by the Church, the bourgeoisie, and the Americans, that made millions of poor Italians cast their vote for the Party. Furthermore, collaboration would not be a solution but a palliative, a subterfuge to gain time. The important point is what will happen later. The Communists agree that the situation is deteriorating rapidly, things are moving towards a final crisis, and there is a power vacuum at the top. They know (as Ugo La Malfa has repeatedly affirmed) that this is "the last of the Centre-Left governments." They know they will have a great role to play when the present coalition collapses, a role for which they have prepared themselves since 1920.

A reading of modern history suggests that similarly weak Centre-Left alliances, which tried

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unsuccessfully in the past to govern troubled and defeated countries, were almost always followed by reactionary and authoritarian régimes or dictatorships. Communists know that this was facilitated whenever a premature revolution was staged. The fact that no such reactionary forces exist in Italy today does not matter. Marxists *know* that "History" will generate the parties and leaders necessary for a particular situation when the times are "ripe." It is therefore probable that the men capable of engineering an authoritarian *coup d'état* will emerge at the proper moment. Clearly a day will come when the industrialised *pays réel* (which has looked indifferently in the past on the decay of the administration and the institutions because it believed that a little disorder was good for business) will discover that a reasonably efficient state is preferable. A day will come when the people will be afraid of bloody riots and disorders in the streets. Furthermore, on that day, the Communists believe, the "Law & Order" forces in Italy will find support from abroad, from Atlantic allies frightened by the danger of an imminent Communist take-over.

WHAT MUST THE PARTY DO? Only a vigilant, well-disciplined and organised Party with clear ideas, aware of the dangers of the situation, capable of getting millions of workers in the streets at a moment's notice, paralysing the life of the country, can confront enemy machinations and prevent a Right-wing *coup d'état*. On the other hand, it is the duty of the Communists to become the reluctant pretorian guard of the Centre-Left government, to see to it that it is not toppled by the wrong people. They should, however, not go so far as to help the government live more vigorously. This is a difficult tight-rope act. To keep up the strength of their Party, they must intensify agitation in the country, increase strikes and riots, fan discontent. Yet all this will not strengthen the government but inevitably enfeeble it further, fan anti-Communist feelings, encourage Right-wing plots, and facilitate the formation of an anti-Communist bloc.

There are other pitfalls. The "vanguard of the proletariat" is often tempted at times to march too fast, too decisively and violently, and thereby to lose contact with the frightened masses. This has happened to Communist leaders in the past in several European countries and was the cause of their most conspicuous débâcles. On the other hand, if the Party is too

timid, it will encourage the rise of revolutionary movements to the left of it. Furthermore, the Italian Communists know they and their vassals represent roughly one-third of the electorate, not enough to conquer power without outside aid. They need allies. They need Left-wing, democratic, progressive allies. They need the help of the very parties which form the government coalition, against which a revolution would be staged, a government coalition which is being discredited daily by the Communists themselves. They therefore talk of finding allies not among the government parties but among the "Left-wing fringes" of those parties, to form a new coalition. But this elegant compromise is considered improbable even by the leaders who propose it.

They prepare themselves for troubled times ahead with very mixed views. What they would like is to keep things more or less as they are; the country in turmoil, the government losing more and more authority, the Communists gaining more and more votes at every election. But a day will come when they will have reached a percentage high enough to have power thrust on them. They will then have to make up their minds. Even this seemingly placid hypothesis would be very dangerous. Their victory (or their approach to victory) would threaten profound international repercussions, provoke a realignment of the balance of forces between the two blocs, and surely increase the risk of a European conflict. Obviously, the Soviet Union has more vital and urgent problems elsewhere than to encourage a Communist government, let alone a proletarian revolution, in Italy. Will the Kremlin leaders allow the Italian Communists a free hand when the time comes? But does the Party still have the revolutionary impetus it had at the end of the war, before Togliatti began reforming it? Is it not now, as some believe, merely a large and soft electoral force of moderate labour voters? In other words, will it disobey Soviet orders and carry out its revolutionary mission—or will it find it convenient to accept them as a good and convenient alibi for its own deficiencies?

The most important of all questions is this: Will the paralysis of the government, the rapid decay of the public administration, the accumulation of unsolved problems, the spread of unrest allow the Communists to choose what role they prefer or to postpone the time for decision? What a spectacle for the dialectical philosopher—Marxists being carried forward by their locomotive of History and worrying whether to stay on or get off.

# AUTHORS & CRITICS

## "Science & Literature"

### A Reply to Sir Peter Medawar

By John Holloway

IF one is cast down—as I am not—by unfavourable circumstances, it might be wise to give up the profession of letters. Many of the best British-Isles authors of today now live in Paris, America, or Ireland: the man of letters finds that his chosen field is silently emptying. In the university, some of his students will be intimating that reality has left him high and dry, and others will be enthusing over the great English classics not in the original but as television serials. If he looks into the future, he sees the landscape, the traditions, the *mores*, and even the human nature which have created his subject all being either transformed by science, or obliterated by its achievements, or terminated by famine. When he then finds that an eminent scientist has given a Romanes Lecture on "Science and Literature," he may well begin to read in expectation of one more attack, this time from a new quarter. I choose my words carefully when I say that he will have to work to find it.

A hundred years ago Bishop Wilberforce attacked science; and at the hands of T. H. Huxley, a Romanes Lecturer perhaps even more distinguished than the present one, he fared extremely ill. His weapons were the weapons of superciliousness, and the man of letters will know better than to use these today. More likely he will feel quite the opposite. He will feel a great sense of inadequacy, partly because when Professor Medawar demands to know whether (to take one example) imbecility isn't perhaps a matter of triiodothyronine, the man of letters will sense his own ignorance on the one hand,

and the great collaborative expertise of science on the other; and partly for a more attractive reason—more attractive, though sufficiently daunting all the same. This is, that "Science and Literature" is really a gem of a lecture. It is years since one has read anything like it. Sir Peter knows all about triiodothyronine and the like, but there is also nothing that any man of letters can teach him about presenting a case and enchanting an audience. "I hope I shall not be thought ungracious..." the lecture begins. This lecturer can never have been thought ungracious in his life.

Or again, "Science and literature... where they might be expected to cooperate, they compete. I regret this very much [and] don't think it necessary.... We all want to be friends." This sort of graciousness is among the man of letters' weapons. Now he finds them turned against himself; and if he wants to take issue, must seem to start the uncooperativeness. Elsewhere, mankind's failure "to justify science in any sense except the scientific" is described as "a reproach to all scholars, scientists and humanists alike." Just as the man of letters begins to wonder whether he ought to accept, along with scientists, a share of the blame—he finds it is coming his way altogether. "I cannot even think of a name for the new discipline that might fill those empty spaces," the lecturer proceeds, "... *perhaps the word I want is just criticism.*" Poor critics, it is them after all.

I have been writing rather as if the man of letters, when he studies this lecture, is going to think that he has to meet, or maybe to issue, some kind of challenge. Professor Medawar would almost certainly repudiate this. Another of the more gracious passages in his lecture is the closing sentence, where with beautiful lightness and discretion he intimates that he is no enemy but a lover of literature, and that what he has said is all in accord with that fact. Indeed, as I suggested earlier on, "Science and Literature" is so good as a lecture that it is itself a piece of literature. But all the same, lovers sometimes need to be received with a little circumspection, and I think we have a case here.

IT MAY BE SAID that Professor Medawar puts science and literature very much on an even footing. "My contention has been," he says in his concluding section, "that science tends to expel literature, and literature science, from any territory to which they both lay claim." Elsewhere we read of "territories of thought... including those upon which literature has a proper claim," and of "large territories of human belief and learning upon which both science... and literature have very important things to say." Even though one hesitates over the idea

JOHN HOLLOWAY has been Reader in Modern English at Cambridge University since 1966, and is a Fellow of Queens' College. His poems and literary criticism are widely known: among his books are Shakespeare's Major Tragedies (1961), The Colours of Clarity (1964), and Wood and Windfall (poems, 1965).

that literature has important things to say about large areas of human *learning*, and may wonder in passing whether the sentence had (as it were) been composed for the sake of science, and literature was then slipped in for the sake of fairness, all the same, the impression of an open mind and an even-handed treatment is strong.

I find myself, though, with the difficult task of arguing that this is an illusion: that Professor Medawar, seeming and meaning also to hold the balance even, is putting his thumb down on it all the time. Perhaps he might castigate this way of putting the matter as among the "trolley metaphors" that he associates with what he calls—too loosely, I believe—"the literary style"; or elsewhere, "imaginative writing." But if it comes to that, "trolley metaphor" is itself a trifle *demi-mondaine*. In fact, for all his dislikes of metaphors, this lecture is rather full of them, ("metaphysical profundities . . . *tuba-notes* from the depths of the Rhine"; "the inane *war-cry* that Beauty is equivalent to Truth"); and sometimes, even though indirectly, they contribute, as with "two quite different worlds, the *salon* and the laboratory," to one's sense that though the balance seems to stay even, this is not quite so. Particularly is this the case with one point in the argument which at first seems especially even in treatment. "Scientific theories . . . begin, *if you like*, as stories . . . we all tell stories." But on reflection, I find that I do not like; because later on, when the metaphor comes again, the balance goes down. The scientist's final story is one "about real life"; but in the end the writer seems to "tell stories" in another sense, and it seems that this has something to do with what a mother reproves her child for ("telling stories"); though, especially if the stories are "wonderfully well told," she does so with "grown-up indulgence." That word "grown-up" comes elsewhere: "factual truth as scientists use it . . . is very advanced, very grown-up." By now, one's sense of an evenly kept balance is less assured than at first.

THESE may seem very small points: but I am trying, little by little, to open out this beautifully sustained texture of argument and implication, and to show that Professor Medawar is much less a friend of literature than we think at first, or than (as I firmly believe) he thinks all the time. Another point of ingress might be what he says about English literature directly: because it is really quite a surprise to notice how unsympathetic this is for the most part. "At a time when the writing of English had reached a peak of *adventurousness and effulgence*." When is this? One cannot tell for certain, but it looks like the time of Shake-

spere and Donne—and certainly it is followed, to the lecturer's relief, by "the New Philosophers of the 17th Century." Between them and Blake, things are better: but when Professor Medawar notices an exception his tone is revealing:

Johnson said that Dryden "delighted to tread upon the brink of meaning. . . ." Don't we all, up to a point? We all recognise a voluptuary element in the higher forms of incomprehension, and a sense of deprivation when matters that have hitherto been mysteries are now made clear.

But don't we also all recognise, in these words, a clear if unintentional hint of the indulgent "grown-up" who is "understanding" the child in others, or perhaps even in himself?

When Professor Medawar turns to the Romantic period, he is very bad; it is at this point that one of the two radical confusions in this lecture begins to show through the skilful surface. At the same time, one must admit that there has been a good deal of bad, programmatic writing on this period, pronouncing (like Professor Medawar) on that non-existent entity the "official Romantic view," and so on, by critics and men of letters; and I am far more embarrassed for my colleagues who have lapsed into these first-year undergraduate errors, than ever Professor Medawar need be for his own imperfections. But all the same, it is just no good saying that the official Romantic view was that Reason and Imagination are antithetical, when there is that celebrated passage, at the end of Wordsworth's *Prelude*, claiming that they are really two names for one thing. Nor can one blithely assert that the Romantics missed "the synergism . . . between imagination and reasoning, between the inventive and the critical faculties," and even level the charge at Coleridge by name, when Coleridge wrote:

Imagination . . . first put in action by the will and "understanding," and *retained under their irremissive . . . control*, reveals itself in . . . a more than usual state of emotion *with more than usual order; judgment ever awake and steady self-possession* with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement.

[*Biographica Literaria*, Ch. 14]

Wordsworth was equally emphatic in an equally celebrated passage:

. . . *habits of meditation* have . . . prompted and regulated my feelings. For all [*i.e.*, although] good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: and though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who . . . had *also thought long and deeply*.

[*Preface to Poems*, 1800]

Even so, Wordsworth was not always able to satisfy Keats in these matters:

...it seems to me that if Wordsworth had *thought a little deeper* at that moment he would not have written [that] Poem at all...it is... not a *search after Truth*.

[Letter to Bailey, Oct. 1817]

Clearly enough, the emphasis is just the same as when Keats said, of one of his own poems, "I assure you that when I wrote it it was a *regular stepping* of the Imagination *towards a Truth*" [Letter to Taylor, Jan. 1818].

Professor Medawar reproves Arnold for the same blindness as he wrongly attributes to "the Romantics." But when Arnold praised a poet in the highest terms he knew, it ran like this:

the peculiar [*i.e.*, uniquely excellent] characteristic of the poetry of Sophocles is...that it represents the highly developed human nature of [Sophocles'] age—human nature developed in a number of directions, politically, socially, religiously, morally developed—in *its completest and most harmonious development in all these directions*; while there is shed over this poetry the charm of that noble serenity which always accompanies true *insight*.

["The Modern Element in Literature"]

Really, I do not think Professor Medawar would be satisfied if I were to sally into triiodothyronine territory, and boned up on it no better than this.

YET THE CURIOUS THING is that he probably need not have been drawn into these matters at all. Probably, he could have dealt with what he really wanted to deal with, and not taken on the Romantics or anything else of the kind. This is where the basic confusion comes out. Something which he calls the "literary syndrome," for example, he describes like this:

*First*, an open or implied claim to...an insight which soars beyond the busy little world of...facts; *Second*,...the critical and inventive faculties no longer work together...but tend if anything to compete...; *Third*,...a style...which...systematically exploits the voluptuary and rhetorical...which at first intrigues and dazzles, but in the end bewilders and disgusts.

Self-evidently, this has nothing to do with *Middlemarch*, or *King Lear*, or *Le Rouge et le Noir*, or *Anna Karenina*, or anything which anyone might set up as "literature" over against "science." Nor was it part of Professor Medawar's purpose to do any such fatuous thing: he was not talking about any literary syndrome *tout court*, but about something that, wisely or unwisely, he called "the literary syndrome in

*science*." Who may its practitioners be? Save for Lévi-Strauss he names no names; and it is none of my business to replace this angelic reticence by something else. But phrases like "salon philosophy," "French writers," "structuralism," "existential psychiatry," and the like, make matters clear enough. What Professor Medawar really wanted to do was to attack certain forms of pseudo-science. And who am I to say him nay? Only, he seems to have disposed his forces hastily; and, noticing that science was the opposite of pseudo-science, and also in some sense the opposite of literature, to have taken it rather for granted that pseudo-science and literature were pretty much akin. When I think, however, of what he traces in his pseudo-scientific syndrome, what strikes me is how much it sounds not like literature, but like pseudo-literature. If he had arranged his lecture so as to contrast science with pseudo-science, and literature with pseudo-literature, and then to trace both a substantial contrast, and a substantial community, between science and literature in their true and valid forms—his difficulties might have been less. But now I am beginning to rewrite "Science and Literature." It is right to be generous to its author, but not quite so generous as that.

I SUGGESTED earlier that there were two radical confusions in "Science and Literature." This also was over-generous, because more can be found: like thinking that "imaginative writing" is the same as letting one's fingers "stray towards the diapason." Does Professor Medawar suppose that the imagination which has helped to make him so eminent a scientist contributes nothing to his—in spite of occasional lapses—beautifully *non*-diapason style? Here is one more confirmation, though, of the fact that Professor Medawar, in spite of his admiration for the Royal Society and that celebrated enemy of the figurative, its historian Bishop Spratt, is himself, when it comes to metaphors, just a little of a "voluptuary"; and it is a couple more of his *trouvailles* in this direction which help one to see the second radical confusion. This comes in what is perhaps the most interesting part of his lecture, in which he distinguishes scientific from literary or poetic or imaginative *truth*.

The first of these trollopy, voluptuary metaphors in which I sense a confusion is of course the story-telling metaphor itself; for it is clear that "telling stories" can mean more things than one, and fairly clear that it clouds the issue in more ways than one. I think it would be right to say that the Scientist does not really *tell* the "stories," the hypotheses, which in the

course of his work he finds do not adequately "fit the facts," though they at first gave some promise of doing so. It would be truer, I believe, to say that he considers, reviews, tries out, these subsequently rejected hypotheses. They are "stories," I suppose, certainly in the sense of proving to be (like the child's fibs, possibly) untruths. The verified and established theory is surely not a "story" in this sense at all. If it deserves to be called a "story," that can only be because it is a story "*about real life*" (in Professor Medawar's phrase): a veridical narration. I myself incline to think that the metaphor lets one down here as well, since it seems to me that a scientific theory is not narrative in form at all. If I am right, then the "telling stories" metaphor is no good for either the preliminary or the definitive stage of scientific theorising.

The important confusion occurs, though, when Professor Medawar's story-telling idea is applied to literature. His claim is that science starts with a fiction (the unconfirmed hypothesis) and moves into truth—that is to say, something which is "*about real life*," which will "conform to reality." Poetic or imaginative efforts, however, "diverge" from this; as for conforming to reality, "this condition is relaxed." In other words, literature remains in all the stages of its production "story-telling" in the original meaning of the term. Its function is not truth-telling in the empirical sense at all. And yet, it may be spoken of, along with science, as "*accounts of the world*"! And yet science and literature have a common goal in that each has "important things to say," in that *both* "give an account of ourselves and investigate our condition"! The fact is that Professor Medawar seems to have found a metaphor (the word "story") which can equally easily be made to mean either "true statement" or "false fiction," and has then treated it the way Mr. Atlas used to treat iron bars.

THE OTHER TROUBLESOME metaphor is "territory": "there are large territories . . . upon which both science and literature have very important things to say . . . those [territories] upon which literature has a proper claim . . . any territory to which they both lay claim. . . ." This metaphor may not be open to objection in itself; but Professor Medawar is undoubtedly so when *he* uses it of literature, because of the distinction which he asserts between scientific, and literary or poetic, truth. Briefly, his claim is that while scientific truth must both "make sense" (that is, satisfy a criterion of internal coherence) and also satisfy a criterion of "correspondence with reality," with poetic truth, the latter condition is relaxed. The criterion of poetic truth is the coherence criterion alone. But if this is so, then

not only can "literature" (which equals "poetry" in this discussion) not possibly have the same "territory" as science; it cannot be said to have a territory at all. There is simply *no* independent reality, "upon" which, or, more idiomatically, about which it can say something "very important." "Upon" and "about" are words in the language of correspondence-truth; and once we recognise this, we recognise that Professor Medawar's lecture is more heavily bedizened with metaphors even than it had seemed; for that literature "opens up a *world* that is larger, more various than real life" proves to be one, and that it "enriches our understanding of the actual by making us move and think and orientate ourselves in a *domain* wider than the actual" is another. World and domain cannot be understood here in any literal sense, or there would be something for the literary truth to correspond to. What transpires is simply this: Professor Medawar sometimes asserts, and sometimes implies, that literature is not "*about*" anything at all; but at the same time constantly speaks as if it were either about the same reality as science (the reality which at one point, as I mentioned, he called "*real life*"), or about another, wider, but perfectly genuine reality. Here is the second radical confusion.

But, confused or not, this is the most interesting point in the lecture, and that at which the discussion ought somehow to be pressed forward. I will try briefly, not indeed to conclude this discussion, but at any rate to open it; and I can do so by taking hints from several places in the lecture. First, one notices that Professor Medawar at one point says that established scientific theories are "*stories about real life*." To the man of letters, surely, it is transparently obvious that this is what he must say about many or most of the fictions of major literature. Curiously enough, he would surely want to add that "*about real life*" (as opposed to "*about nature*" or "*about reality*") seemed to him if anything to be rather apter for the major literary work than for science. One need not pursue this in order to see that perhaps it points towards ways in which the correspondence criterion applies differently to literary-poetic truth from how it applies to scientific; but unquestionably applies all the same.

Second, there are two particularly interesting observations in this lecture, which come far apart, and which one is a little surprised to find left so. One is about literature and one about science, and they are significantly different yet curiously reminiscent of one another. Here they are:

1. [literary truth] enriches our understanding by making us move and think and orientate ourselves in a domain *wider than the actual* . . .



2. Scientific reasoning is... a dialogue... between the possible and the actual, between proposal and disposal... between what might be true, and what is in fact the case.

I find myself wondering whether Professor Medawar happened ever to set these remarks side by side in his mind. What seems to show up from his lecture, though, is that the "possible," the "what might be true," integral as it is to the scientist's thinking, is integral only to its earlier stages, and is "disposed" of as the final stage is reached. But it seems, in contrast to this, that ideas of what is possible or what might be true, as against what is in fact the case, belong as much to the latest stage in the creation of the literary work—the final, finished version—as to any earlier stage; and that this is so not only in more ways than one, but in ways which require more analysis than they have received.

IN SAYING THIS, I have first in mind what everyone knows: that a major literary fiction tells us "about real life" indirectly, while directly it narrates not a historical case, but a "convincing" possible case. About this, however, there is an important and much-neglected fact which needs analysis, though I am not able fully to supply it. It is that the "case" (one recalls James' use of the word) narrated by a major fiction is not properly elucidated by any of the terms which are commonly shared between the scientific and the literary modes of thought. The cases of Anna and Vronsky, or Clarissa and Lovelace, or Birkin and Ursula—and so on—are quite certainly not "average" cases; nor, equally certainly, are they "probable" ones. In their different ways, they are all fairly, or very, exceptional cases; but at the same time, their interest is concealed by the bald use merely of the word "possible." Always, they bear on life more sharply than just to count as "what *might* be true"; they are what might very well be so, or might only too easily be so, or something like that. They are extremes which somehow also have a quality of the classical; or seem revelatory of the nature of the normal, even as they deviate away from it to an extreme. (I suspect that here the man of letters might receive some kind of formal help from the applied mathematician; but on the only occasion when I sought such help, I was unable to explain my problem, and the matter had to lapse...)

There is another respect in which, to speak loosely, "the actual" and "the possible" come together in the literary work with a peculiar

intimacy: and this also has been neglected. There is indeed a "domain wider than the actual" in, say, the great novel or play, in that for much of the time, perhaps even all the time, the work asks us to sense how easily, how readily, it is open to more interpretations than one; how close to the way that the writer clearly wants us to see his action and his characters, are other ways of seeing them, which he probably wants us to reject—though if we reject these without coming near to accepting them first, his efforts are as good as wasted. Surely, also, it is at this point that one sees a reason why "about real life" fits literature better even than it does science. This quality of things which one can express (though only loosely) by saying that possibility, risk, and potentiality nudge right up against actuality at every point, is present and potent in literature because so it is also in the common affairs of men. Often, of course, ordinary life admits of such a clear Yes-or-No as I suppose the scientist has when he feels able firmly to eliminate a hypothesis; but one knows the terrible destructiveness of those who think it does so all the time.

Does this mean that Professor Medawar is a terribly destructive man? I am afraid that, like many other real-life questions, this does not quite admit of a clear yes or no. Certainly, that ordinary life is often of that kind means that one cannot always speak quite plainly and unequivocally about it; and—in intention if not always in performance—Professor Medawar is at his least tolerant over obscurity. In his view, unless one is (like Kant) struggling with intrinsically *difficult problems*, to write obscurely is either to lack skill, or to be "up to mischief." "No one who has something... important to say will willingly run the risk of its being misunderstood." In reply, one can only say, it depends what you think real life is like; and Professor Medawar seems not to have improved on George Chapman:

Obscurities in affection of words and undigested conceits, is pedanticall and childish; *but where it shroudeth it selfe in the heart of [its] subject... with that darkness will I labour to be shrouded.*

This would never do for Professor Medawar. Of "the concept of truthfulness which belongs essentially to imaginative literature, that in which the opposite of a truth is not a falsehood but... another truth," he says, with a touch of the scorn which one cannot but detect not infrequently when literature and its values are at issue—"We are back in Beulah." But I do not believe that "real life" is Beulah at all.



# A Rejoinder

By P. B. Medawar

TWENTY YEARS AGO, when I first applied for a visa to enter America, a consular official asked me if it was in any sense my ambition to overthrow the Constitution of the United States. I told him that I would certainly not overthrow it on purpose and could only hope that I wouldn't do so by mistake. He didn't seem to think this very funny, and I suppose Mr. John Holloway won't either if I answer him in the same spirit; for he in his turn suspects me of scheming to overthrow literature, and asks himself whether I may not perhaps be a "terribly destructive man." I am sorry he should have misunderstood me so far as to entertain such horrid suspicions, and do not quite know why he thought it right to adopt such a wary and defensive attitude throughout. I am not attacking him or anything he stands for.

Holloway says that my attack was "really" directed against pseudo-science and pseudo-literature. This is true in a sense, but in a sense that is needlessly inexact. Science and literature can be "pseudo" in a great many different ways: science through fraud or self-deception, faulty reasoning, or any one of a number of methodological omissions or mistakes; literature through insincerity, inhumanity, triviality, hollowness, and the rest. In my Romanes Lecture I was speaking about a special kind of corruption of science ("poetism") that is characteristically literary in origin, and, by implication, about a special kind of pseudo-ness in literature and the humane arts generally ("scientism") that can be traced back to an origin in science. I expressed my abhorrence of them both. I was not trying to be gracious and conciliatory when I said, in its last sentences, that my lecture would not have been so very different if it had been inspired by love of literature rather than by love of science; but a defence of the humane arts against mistaken, misapplied or contextually inappropriate scientific notions would have been a much triter theme, and one that I am not specially well qualified to develop. And why should I play an away match when I don't think of myself as playing a match at all?

Holloway has cruelly exposed one or two indiscretions or errors of taste in my lecture. ("Trollopy metaphors," for example. I had doubts when I wrote it. Why *does* one let that kind of thing go by?) He too has lapses of taste, and misquotes me twice, on one occasion seriously. I did not say that "imaginative writing is the same as letting one's fingers stray

towards the diapason," nor would I express myself in such a clumsy way. What I said was, "a scientist's fingers... must never stray towards the diapason"—and indeed they must not. Nevertheless there are quite a number of things in my lecture which I now wish I had put otherwise, and Holloway is too good a critic not to feel the same about his reply. Let us turn to more serious matters.

FIRST, THE ROMANTICS. Did Coleridge really grasp the idea of a synergism between reason and imagination; between the inventive and critical faculties? I do not wish to sound arrogant, but on this technical and rather specialised subject I am probably the better informed and better read. Holloway makes a bad case for Coleridge, if his quotation is the best evidence he can summon up. My discussion of the matter in my book, *The Art of the Soluble* (1967), shows how very much nearer he actually got. Holloway's quotations show, not that his chosen spokesman understood the gist of the hypothetico-deductive method, but that he himself does not. So far as I know the first writer in English to see scientific method as a dialogue between imaginative proposal and critical disposal, the two together doing what neither could do apart, was William Whewell in *The Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences* (1840). Coleridge had some important elements of that conception, but failed to grasp it as a whole.

I called this a tragedy of cultural history for two reasons: (a) Coleridge *could* have got there; he alone had everything it takes—the depth of learning, the intellectual penetration, the philosophic and scientific tastes; my admiration for him is such that I would stretch the evidence almost beyond reason to give him credit for a prescience which he did not in fact possess. (b) Whewell's scientific methodology was overshadowed for nearly 100 years by Mill's, and for reasons that deserve a special investigation by students of the history of ideas—because so much of the modern rivalry or sense of tension between science and literature has grown out of the idea that "scientific method" is a precise formulary of intellectual behaviour, a calculus of discovery that supersedes imaginative insight in scientific thought, just as modern technology supersedes ineffectual homely skills.

HOLLOWAY DERIDES my speaking of an "official" Romantic opinion, missing (but this must be my fault) the ironic juxtaposition of the Romantic with the official, *i.e.* Royal Society, point of view. It is now seventy years since Professor Henry Beers told us that the English Romantic movement had "no leader, no programme, no organ, no theory of art, and very little coher-

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ence." No official opinion, then: the point is taken, though one wonders why it should be made.

Yet a belief in the antithesis between Reason and Imagination was a sort of colour-wash under almost the whole of English romantic thought. For Blake on imagination *versus* critical reasoning, refer in particular to his annotations of George Berkeley's *Siris*, or summon up from *Jerusalem* the Spectre of Rational Power that cast a mildew over Albion; for Blake the imaginative faculty, unlike reasoning, is inborn, innate, a manifestation of divinity in man; anyone who thinks otherwise is a fool or a knave.

The distinction Shelley draws, in his *Defence of Poetry*, between the proper domains of reason and imagination gains special force from his having told Elizabeth Hitchener ten years beforehand that he had "rejected all fancy, all imagination... I am now an undivided votary of reason." A man who changes sides must be specially aware that there are sides to change. The *Defence* was, of course, a defence against Peacock's *Four Ages*, but on this point they did not disagree. It is implicit in Peacock's argument that reason and imagination compete with each other; much of Shelley's defence is against the imputation that reason was gaining the upper hand. In his Introduction to the *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana*, Coleridge saw the poetic impulsion as "a mighty, inward power, a feeling-*quod nequeo monstrare, et sentio tantum*," and in Chapter XIII of *Biographia Literaria* there is a famous passage in which exercise of the "primary imagination" is seen as a microcosmic rehearsal of the primordial act of creation itself, "a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite *I AM*."

I am not quite sure what Holloway intends us to infer from Arnold's passage on Sophocles; the passages I myself had in mind were from *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time*, and here he will be found to express just the opinions I attribute to him.

TO GO BACK TO synergism. Can it be that Holloway takes "synergism" to mean no more than that a poet or other artist will scrutinise his own work very critically before he is satisfied with the result? I think not, because the synergism to which I was referring represented (so I said) "the most important methodological discovery of modern thought". For me the most interesting and exciting of all intellectual problems is *how* the imagination is harnessed for the performance of scientific work, so that the steam, instead of blowing off in picturesque clouds and rattling the lid of the kettle, is now made to turn a wheel. Literature and the fine arts have a cognate problem, but its solution, whatever it may

be (and there must surely be more than one), is not the same.

It is towards a solution of that other great problem that Holloway, in his later paragraphs, is reaching out. I do not disagree with what he says and do not think that Aristotle would have done so either; my only complaint is that the context of his argument should be an attack on my own opinions. If he had said that my Romanes Lecture was not fully worked out and offers no definitive solution of any of the problems with which it deals, I should have agreed with him completely. I am groping: so is he. But it really is perverse of him to construe the lecture as a covert attack on literature in general. Of Poetic Truth I said that people might claim for it that

it represents truth, not of a higher kind, but simply of a different kind; an alternative conception... which enriches our understanding of the actual by making us move and think and orientate ourselves in "a domain wider than the actual." I believe this view is essentially a fair one... [but] great difficulties arise *when it is allowed to infiltrate into science*.

Elsewhere I spoke of a literary syndrome *in scientific or quasi-scientific thought*, and quite early in my lecture I undertook to illustrate its bad influence on the behavioural sciences. Surely my intentions were clear enough?

Again, Holloway is very scornful when he attributes to me the opinion (I am quoting him now) that

science and literature have a common goal in that each has "important things to say," in that *both* "give an account of *ourselves* and investigate *our condition*"!

In fact, I said something quite different: that both science and literature have very important things to say about the behavioural sciences, and that

*these subjects lie within the compass of literature* in so far as they have to do with human hopes, fears, beliefs and motives; with the attempt to give an account of ourselves and investigate our condition....

Holloway and I are very far apart here: I simply don't know what is preying on his mind.

HOLLOWAY ENDS his critique with George Chapman on obscurity. I do not know the context, so cannot say whether I have improved on him or not. As a medical scientist I have always taken Thomas Browne as chief spokesman for the voluptuary element in incomprehension ("I love to lose myself in a mystery..." etc.) and am quite sure I cannot improve on what Coleridge

had to say on the matter (*Aphorisms on Spiritual Religion*, VIII).

But in all this disputatious talk about Reason and Imagination and what reality really consists of, is there not a danger that we may overlook what George John Romanes had to say himself? Let me make amends for having declined, in my lecture, to quote his poetry. Here is a fragment of Romanes' memorial poem to Darwin. We are to imagine Romanes in a paroxysm of grief at the sheer unreasonableness of Darwin's being taken away from us.

"*The struggle cease*," he counsels himself,

*And when the calm of Reason comes to thee,  
Behold in quietness of sorrow peace.*

*By such clear light e'en in thine anguish see  
That Nature, like thyself, is rational;  
And let that sight to thee such sweetness bring  
As all that now is left of sweetness shall:*

*So let thy voice in tune with Nature sing,  
And in the ravings of thy grief be not  
Upon her lighted face thyself a blot.*

This poem was specially selected for us by a distinguished man of letters and a former President of Magdalen College, T. Herbert Warren; *why*, God only wot.

## The Hermit

Everything that happens is a message:  
Sleeplessness, stars out of sight, a misprint on a page,  
The shape of that sack in the broken window pane.

I am fifty if you ask me but my age  
Like my smell is meaningless. It measures  
The air I have used, the decay in my teeth  
And the walls of my hut. It is not the age of stone  
Or even its strength that speaks to me:  
Only its stillness.

She was never still. She wore hats  
That made me laugh and scream. Naked  
She made demands that turned me into a dog.

You may say I should never have married  
And I would agree if it were any consequence  
But it no longer matters. The night she tore my arm  
And spat in my blood she gave me  
The sanctity of an object the colourless varnish  
That preserves from diminishing contacts the glaze  
That protects my human skin while those messages  
Shuttle through the day and night and transform  
The sores on my hands into crystal flowers.

I am a man made free. My hut stands  
In the corner of the field. The rats run in the rocks  
The rooks congregate above me. My feet  
Are wrapped in sacks my food is mouldy  
But the foreshore is my kingdom, finding  
Objects and listening to the waves I am  
Collecting signals: the bones of a dead bird

A mollusc in a pool of purple water, sadness  
A piece of wormeaten wood I am collating  
A notation of the universe for the birth of a word  
I need my solitude.

*Emyr Humphreys*

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## LETTERS

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### "Progressivism as a Reactionary Utopia"

MAY I make clear my bias at the outset by explaining that I have taught happily at Dartington for six years. I feel that your biographical note underneath Professor Cox's review of Maurice Ash's *Who Are The Progressives Now?* [ENCOUNTER, May] might have more specifically indicated his bias.

Professor Cox makes play with the pronouncements of Dr. Winnicott; first of all quoting him as if he were an educational expert and then laughing at him because he finds him an ignorant educational expert. Truth to tell, Dr. Winnicott is not an educational psychologist but a child psychologist (an important distinction that is surely by now understood in Manchester) and therefore no more of an expert on Progressive education than Professor Cox, though perhaps more humble about his lack of expertise. What Dr. Winnicott was actually talking about was the possible effect on the Progressive Schools of a large incursion of State-financed maladjusted children.

Apart from the above inaccuracy, Professor Cox adopts two points of view that are tediously familiar to those of us who teach at places like Dartington. The first is that Summerhill is our Garden of Eden. This is only true in the sense that most of us are aware that somebody made a mistake in the Garden of Eden. The second is that cooperation and kindness are synonymous in the educational world with intellectual sloppiness, abrogation of standards, abdication of the role of the teacher, lack of "cutting edge," a plague that is spreading through the country and so on. In reply to this polarised kind of argument I can only say that I make the rules in my classroom, just like any teacher anywhere, and that these rules are based on a belief that what is being done should be done properly. Outside class the whole community makes the rules, and why not? Insecurity, competition and resentment are with us all the time without our having to create them artificially. It is the latter course that we reject and in rejecting it we are considered odd. Yet my friends in the "real" world would seem to get on by merit and inclination rather than through fear and resentment specially created by their employers.

There seems to be a certain simplemindedness in the mental attitudes of Professor Cox.

JOHN WIGHTWICK

Dartington Hall,  
Devon

It's a RELIEF to hear that Dr. Winnicott is not competent to speak on education. In the list of participants in the Dartington colloquy he is simply called a "psychologist." I'm glad Mr. Wightwick has doubts about A. S. Neill and Summerhill. In *Who Are The Progressives Now?* Professor Harry Rée says: "Neill himself, sadly enough, doesn't seem to realise what

an enormous debt huge numbers of us owe to him." I am indeed simple-minded; I believe children must often be made to work, and that otherwise they tend to grow lazy.

C. B. COX

University of Manchester

### Left or Right

MAY I MAKE one factual correction to Mr. Rudolf Klein's very interesting and otherwise fair-minded review of my book *Left or Right* in your April issue? In this book I suggest three classifications: egalitarian *v.* elitist, radical *v.* orthodox, and liberal *v.* authoritarian. Despite their many weaknesses I put them forward as an improvement on a simple reliance on *left* and *right* alone.

Mr. Klein's argument against the suggested classifications hangs on his belief that they show Roy Jenkins and Michael Foot "first cousins as far as their attitudes are concerned." This is mistaken. If any reader cares to examine the charts for himself, he will find that on the egalitarian-elitist axis the two men are very far apart indeed. They are in fact placed quite as far apart as they would be on a conventional left-right axis, which Mr. Klein regards as "in many ways" a more satisfactory instrument of prediction. I do make it clear several times in the course of the book that the egalitarian-elitist dimension contains in my view most of the residue of meaning in *left* and *right*. On this axis Mr. Jenkins is placed very much nearer to Mr. Heath than he is to Mr. Foot, which should surely meet with the approval of any political correspondent.

Neither terminology gives more than a hint of the exact differences between the two men's attitudes, or explains the historical experiences to which they have reacted. The question at issue is whether matters should be left there, or whether it is worth bringing in two additional dimensions. The liberal-authoritarian axis does demonstrate the fact that in Mr. Klein's words "on the libertarian issues the two men tend to be on the same side." The radical-orthodox classification demonstrates that in the period 1964-7 (beyond which my book could not go), Roy Jenkins was more radical than Harold Wilson on most of the key issues of the day. I really fail to see how recording these other aspects, however imperfectly, gives one a poorer predictive instrument than the conventional one-dimensional classification in which Michael Foot appears at one end in the Labour Party spectrum, Roy Jenkins at the other, with Harold Wilson in between.

Questions such as how near one man is to another in his views do not have the same simple answer on a three-dimensional classification as they have on the one-dimensional variety, as it is necessary to record people's distances from each other on all three axes. Mr. Klein's error is to treat three dimensions as if they were one and to try and work out some sort of average rating for his examples.

Old habits die hard.

SAMUEL BRITTAN

London

# The Revolt against Hitler

*A Reply to David Astor — By CHRISTOPHER SYKES*

REPLYING TO Mr. David Astor is not an altogether easy task for me as so many points which he makes in a spirit of contradiction are identical with those I have tried to make in my book about Adam von Trott, and in my article in *ENCOUNTER* (December 1968). Mr. Astor describes my writing as beautiful and sincere, but it is evident from the impressions he has carried away from it that I am a stranger to the art of clarity. Nonetheless, as he writes as spokesman for the survivors of the 1944 conspiracy, he compels an answer. I only have space to touch on a few of his objections [June].

1. It is alleged that I have not "adequately examined the British side of this story," and I take it that he implies that I have shirked this task out of fear of discovering "a British share of responsibility for a failure to prevent or shorten the war." If I quote far more German official documents than British ones, it is because there are far more such German documents to quote. No British official documents directly concerning the case of Trott have yet been published. It seems evident that in the war there was a Trott dossier in the Foreign Office and by 1975, under the 30-year Rule, all its contents should be available to researchers. Until then the German documents on the subject predominate. If, however, Mr. Astor means that I show in my book and my article a fond and nationalistic partiality for those of my countrymen who before and in the war dismissed the conspirators as mischievous and wrong-headed, I apologise, condemn myself, and can only plead my incapacity to express myself as I would like to.

2. In my article I remarked that the little acclaim accorded over the years to the German resistance may be (in part) due to the fact that it completely failed. I said that in practical terms the July conspiracy achieved no more than the tragic anti-Nazi rising of the Munich students of 1943. Mr. Astor alleges that I seem "inclined to accept this comparison and verdict." The comparison (in strictly practical terms of result) I must reluctantly accept. But what does he mean by the verdict? That I regard the failure of both risings, (indeed all failure) as deserving of contempt? I think the most careless reader is not justified in such an impression.

3. Mr. Astor proceeds to draw a distinction between resistance against an occupying force and against a "dictatorship of your fellow countrymen." I refer him to the last paragraph of my article. I found it clear, but perhaps it was not.

4. The German Resistance sought help from abroad before and during the War. It was refused by Great Britain in the former case, and by Great Britain and the United States in the second. In my

book and my article I tried to show why this anti-Nazi endeavour has since the war been criticised in Britain, and what was its undoubted justification. I am in agreement with what Mr. Astor says on the subject until (after repeating that I rely too much on German as opposed to British authorities) he says that "like almost all the British officials of that time, Mr. Sykes seems to assume that the German opposition... ought to have been able to make a revolution without cooperation from abroad." If I "seem" to assume such a view, then I beg Mr. Astor to read p. 238 of my book, and if the opaque character of my prose still leaves him with his conviction, then I cheerfully indulge in further self-condemnation.

5. I refer now to Mr. Astor on p. 5, par. 4. Whatever the obscurity of my mode of writing, he should not, if he read me with any attention, have asserted that, referring to German army commanders, I imply "mysteriously that the generals of other nations have a tradition of 'glorious revolution'." In my article I referred to the fact that "people abroad" *i.e.*, outside Germany, "belonged to traditions that took pride in their 'glorious revolution'." The quoted phrase may be unknown to Mr. Astor but it is current idiom. To most readers it is not mysterious. I did not think it necessary to explain that by "people abroad" I meant peoples, not only their generals.

6. Mr. Astor comes to a more interesting point when he deals with the Halder-Witzleben conspiracy of 1938. What I meant by an "escapist legend" in my article in *ENCOUNTER* (December 1968, p. 47 par. 3) does *not* refer to the undoubted fact that Chamberlain's attendance at the Munich conference ruled out the practicability of mounting the conspiracy after he had taken his decision, but to the opinion by which "it is held as axiomatic that Chamberlain's failure to stake all on the Halder-Witzleben conspiracy was a monstrous failure of statesmanship *because the conspiracy was bound to succeed.*" This I do regard as myth. Mr. Astor has nothing to say about the conspirators' delay nor about Witzleben's reported doubts as to whether the plot could possibly succeed. He follows with some more misreporting. He alleges that I believe "in a *specifically* German proneness 'to blame other people for their errors and mistakes.'" (my italics). What I said was: "The Germans are perhaps even more prone than most to blame... etc." Not quite the same.

7. Mr. Astor's last paragraph on p. 6. Mr. Astor really must have one more bash at my difficult prose. He thinks I am "inclined to interpret all Trott's ideas as motivated mainly by German

nationalism." I have explained in my book (pp. 81-82) at some length what I mean by Trott's nationalism: a noble element in the German ethos, remote from military aggression and quite compatible with the internationalism he sought. The strongest single piece of evidence of Trott's nationalism is in a long correspondence with a young English woman. Mr. Astor quotes from the letters in this very remarkable collection, and later in the article he suggests, as Mr.

R. H. S. Crossman did in the review which he wrote for *The Observer*, that I showed poor judgment in attaching the importance I did to them. The most significant of the letters I quote were written when Trott was in China and his friend was in England, and he had no reason to fear Nazi censorship. Unlike others of his letters these show no trace of disguise. It seems to me that if this massive document in fact does not reflect Trott's mind, as it seems to do, then

## To An Angry

I COULD MASSAGE your heartstrings or curl your hair, depending on your politics, by quoting from the torrential reaction (laudatory, furious, flattering, venomous) to my evangelical letter To an Angry Young Student [ENCOUNTER, Feb.] Before it was printed a friend urged me to soften my stand, saying, "It may play into the hands of the Right!" And of the sermon you are about to read, others may say, "It will play into the hands of the Left!"

Both positions seem to me indefensible. Surely, the validity of an idea has nothing to do with who agrees or disagrees with it. To censor the expression of your thinking because of whom it may please or displease is simply to let others do your thinking for you. I detest thought control. Here, sans apology, is my answer to some overheated letter writers from the Right.

DEAR MR. X:

Thank you for writing—and that's about all the thanks you'll get from me. You say, "Let's throw all these young rebels out of college!" Over my dead body. Free speech does not stop at the gates of a campus. On the contrary, it should find a special sanctuary there, for it is indispensable to the search for truth. A student has a perfect right to protest, picket, petition, dissent. When students riot, set fires, throw rocks, stop others from attending classes, use bullhorns to disrupt the peace—they are acting not as students but as hoodlums. Let the law attend to them—the swifter the better.

But you want students "thrown out" simply for protesting, which is what the Communists and Fascists do—from Russia to Spain, China to Cuba. They expel, intimidate or imprison those who question or complain. Don't emulate them.

YOU SAY, "Draft these college punks into the Army and let our GIs knock sense into their heads!" You horrify me. I don't want anyone to "knock sense" into anyone's head. To put the point sharply, I quote a great jurist: "Your freedom to move your fist ends at the point where my nose begins." I have a long nose.

As for the draft: I consider the present draft impractical, unnecessary and morally indefensible (it would take more than this page to explain why). The young have every right to speak, petition and argue against it (this has nothing to do with Viet Nam)—peacefully.

"Why let these creeps wear stinking clothes

and beards? Line them up, hold them down, bathe them, shave them, wash out their mouths with soap!" I loathe your bullyboy views more than their childish flight into dirtiness. Kooky clothes break no laws (though courts have ruled on schoolboard regulations governing dress, hair, etc.). Young slobs pollute the nearby air—but the courts have not yet ruled on that.

The defiant cultivation of filth is, of course, a clinical sign of psychological disturbance. I feel sorry for the kids who cannot know the psychological price they will pay for regressing to the anal level. But your excessive response to the dirty is as distasteful to me as their sad glorification of discomfort disguised as "freedom."

You praise me for "speaking out for those students who are not newsworthy because they don't riot" and add: "Defend our wonderful Establishment!" Well, the only Establishment I defend is the one called Reason. I find violence abhorrent, fanaticism disgusting, and demagoguery unspeakable. The terrorist tactics of adolescents may parade as "idealism," but they shatter that consensus of civility that is the very heart of a civilisation. Your blind veneration of the status quo cannot help us solve problems that must and can be solved—by intelligence, not force.

YOU ASK, "What do students have to be so unhappy about in our colleges?" A great deal: gargantuan classes and bursting dormitories; professors who hate teaching because it interferes with their research; educator-bureaucrats who reward the publication of trivia much more than dedication to students and teaching; academic tenure, which encourages some pedants to "goof off" in lectures and subsidises others to indulge their non-academic hobbies.

But this does not mean we should turn our colleges over to self-dramatising militants whose most conspicuous talent is a capacity to oversimplify problems whose complexity they do not begin to comprehend. Rabble-rousers (Right or Left) are rabble-rousers, no matter what songs they sing, with what lumps in their throats, with whatever ambiguous dreams in their eyes. Nazi students also flaunted "rights" they held superior to the lawful process of "hypocritical," "fake" democracy—and many of their professors, in Germany and Austria, cheered them on.

Rebels who think they should prevail because they dissent are deluded: Dissenters have no

it throws an unpleasant light on him: it shows him as a person of frivolous insincerity, and something of a fool. For that reason I do not accept the Astor-Crossman estimate of the papers. I believe he meant what he said.

Mr. Astor seems to have rather an old-fashioned attitude to the female sex. "Letters to women friends" he regards as light evidence by their very nature, and he refers to "the (to me) unconvincing

remark of the lady who suggested that his attitude to the Slavonic people at the end of the war was not different altogether to that of the Nazis." In this passage Mr. Astor faintly but effectively misquotes the lady. (See my book, p. 420.) I should add that this lady-like personage is a formidable authority on modern Europe of which she is a most distinguished historian.

8. On p. 8 Mr. Astor launches a vigorous attack

## Old Man

*greater moral or political rights than non-dis-senters.*

YOU ASK, "What has basically bugged these hippies, anyway?" First, their parents, I suspect, who confused political liberalism with indecisiveness; who felt so guilty about discipline that they appeased temper tantrums and rewarded rage with concessions (forgetting that infants want boundaries placed on their freedom); who never gave their progeny a clear model of responsible conduct. I think many militant students are unconsciously searching for adults who will act as adults—without apology or ambivalence or guilt; adults who will not be bamboozled by adolescent irrationality; adults who respond with swift rebuffs to those challenges to authority that are, at bottom, a testing by the young of the moral confidence of their elders. Professor David Riesman says we are witnessing the rebellion of the first generation in history "who were picked up whenever they cried."

YOU SAY, "Why not show the young how wonderful our educational system is?" It is remarkable in what it has done (the greatest, widest mass education in history) and in what it can achieve. But I hold a very gloomy view about schools that can produce students (and teachers) who are so strikingly ignorant about (1) how this society actually works; (2) what the economic bases of a democracy must be; (3) what the irreplaceable foundations of freedom, and the inviolable limits of civil liberties, must be; (4) how conflicts between minorities and majorities must be managed. (Suppose that Ku Klux Klanners in Alabama occupied classrooms, asserted the right to appoint faculty, threatened to burn down buildings, and demanded total amnesty in advance?)

Immature students are mesmerised by utopian slogans that rest on fantasies; and they are ill-educated enough to mouth the obsolete clichés of anarchism, the "revolutionary" nostrums even Lenin called "infantile leftism," the grandiose "demands" that demonstrate a plain lack of sense and a massive ignorance of history. ("Student power" has simply ruined South and Central American universities.)

YOU ASK, "Why doesn't anyone brand these troublemakers as the Communists they are?" That organisers plan and foment trouble, going

from campus to campus, is becoming clearer each day. That they are professed Communists is neither clear nor likely. Student incantations about Ho Chi Minh, Che, and Mao are not so much evidence of Communism as of naïveté. The young enjoy baiting their elders with shocking symbols, and ignore what Che, Ho, and Mao stand for—total despotism over the mind. Dictatorship is no less vicious because it claims to seek "superior" freedom.

Students who are not Communists are, alas, employing Communist/Fascist tactics: "confrontations" designed to force the authorities to call in the police—and then to force the police to use force, which is decried (and televised) and used for propaganda purposes. They dare not reflect on what Mao has done to the Chinese "student cadres" he encouraged; or on what happens to students who criticise the Establishment in Moscow or Havana.

YOU SAY, "Professor Marcuse should not be allowed to teach at San Diego!" Dr. Marcuse has a right to say or write whatever he wants—however mushy, opaque, unsupported by data, insupportable in logic and ludicrous as economics it is. His competence and integrity as a teacher are for his colleagues—not you or me—to decide. And if San Diego has no professors who are able to punch holes in old Herbert's gaseous balloons, it should promptly hire some.

Incidentally, Marcuse, like you, wants to deny freedom of speech to "certain" people; you and he differ only on whom you want to confer the blessings of dictatorship: Marcuse has publicly said (at Rutgers, June 1965) that since Negroes are "brainwashed," and presumably vote in a hypnotised manner, "I would prefer that they did not have the right to choose wrongly." Such thinking fills prisons and concentration camps.

FINALLY, to my angry old and young compatriots: If we cannot pursue knowledge with moderation and mutual respect in our colleges, then where on earth can we? "Society cannot exist," wrote Burke, "[without] a controlling power upon will. . . . The less of it there is within, the more there must be without. . . . Men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters."

Leo Rosten

in LOOK MAGAZINE (New York)

on the change of attitude by Sir John Wheeler-Bennett from late 1939, when he was Trott's confidant in America, to late 1941 when he abandoned all hope in the German opposition and later came to be an apologist for "Unconditional Surrender." The attack would be very much more effective if Mr. Astor could have brought himself to consider seriously the piece of evidence which superficially told against Trott, namely his association with the *Indienreferat* in which he and Subhas Chandra Bose were the moving spirits in late 1941. The purpose of this department of the German Foreign Office was to raise an Indian Legion from Indian prisoners-of-war to fight with the Axis against the Allies. He and the Indian nationalist leader appeared together in P.O.W. camps in Italy in order to raise recruits. Italy was a main Allied source of intelligence about the enemy. Until British documents are open to investigation it is impossible to prove, but it seems the strongest possible probability that Trott's association with the *Indienreferat* was known in the Middle East and London in its early stages. Given his Left-wing anti-Imperialist feeling, Trott may have taken part in this enterprise in an ambivalent spirit. Certain it is that he never lost thereby his anti-Nazi conviction. But if the whole thing was camouflage, then surely, in judging a loss of trust, one must take account of the likely effect on an Englishman of camouflage activity which not only deceived Trott's Nazi superiors, but some of his anti-Nazi collaborators. I refer the reader, especially Mr. Astor, to chapter 14 of my book. It's worth having a go, despite the limitations on my style of which Mr. Astor has made me aware.

9. Mr. Astor mentions Wilfrid Israel, whom I used to meet in Berlin many years ago. I join Mr. Astor in his admiration of that fine man's unwavering faith in Trott. But to conclude from this, and from the fact that Trott accepted a Rhodes House subsidy to enable him to travel to China, and from the further fact that he maintained close friendships with Sir Stafford Cripps, Reinhold Niebuhr and Lord Lothian, that there could have been no element of nationalism in him seems to me extravagant. I am reminded of those who say that all criticism of T. E. Lawrence is invalidated by the fact that Winston Churchill admired him. (I suppose I must add that I see no particular resemblance between Lawrence and Trott.)

10. Then Mr. Astor moves "incidentally" to an unconsidered account of the influence of the "Final Solution" on the Allied "Unconditional Surrender" policy. I am said to "hazard a guess that the British Government was high-mindedly motivated against dealing with the German opposition after 1942 by Hitler's mass extermination of the Jews and the British use of this supreme atrocity in propaganda." I will not enlarge on the contradiction inherent in this sentence, but will quote from my *ENCOUNTER* article: "By 1943 [the Final Solution] was widely known about and took a prominent part in Allied propaganda. The result was to add a new dimension to the hatreds of war and there sprang up a longing for vengeance on the Germans." In my book I mentioned the conjunction of this indignation with the battle for Stalingrad. Mr. Astor is moved by these passages to repeat

(without any hint of contradiction) the grossest allegations of extremist Zionist propaganda to the effect that (with the Palestine problem in mind) Churchill's Government secretly aided the Nazi genocide movement. Hochhuth forward!

11. I think I need not occupy space in rebutting Mr. Astor when he says that my assertion (on evidence) that Lord Halifax's speech on 29 June 1939 (to which Trott contributed some ideas) failed in its object, indicates that I regard the ideas and methods of the German opposition as futile. He moves to more interesting matter on p. 10 par. 7. This concerns Trott's report to his superiors in Germany on his visit to Cliveden on 3 June 1939 and his subsequent meeting with Neville Chamberlain. The report (published among documents captured in Germany) caused a ridiculous scandal in the British press when first made public. It was intended for Hitler himself, so was (very sensibly) written in Nazi terms, but analysis has long shown that it had no Nazi intention.

Mr. Astor says: "Today, more can be known. For instance, that Trott's report... was typed by Wilfrid Israel's secretary and jointly composed by two of his closest conspiratorial friends, Peter and Christabel Bielenberg, all of whom happen to be alive and here to be cross-examined—if anyone is interested."

I was much "interested" by knowledge of this when writing my book and examined Mr. and Mrs. Bielenberg with profit. But the really interesting new information, even more arresting than the identity of the typist, seems to have escaped Mr. Astor's notice, though it was published for the first time, so far as I know, in my book and then in my article. It is contained in the surviving correspondence of Hubert Ripka with an English friend of Trott, and with Winston Churchill. This shows that Trott's 1939 mission was not the unplanned foray that has been supposed, but had a defined purpose. This was to put forward to political leaders in England a suggestion that a German withdrawal from Bohemia would be rewarded by a readjustment of the Polish-German frontier. It was not a Nazi plan, but an attempt to influence Nazi policy from within, so it seems. In my book I attributed the plan to Weizsäcker but I may be mistaken.

12. My last point. Mr. Astor asserts that "the general thesis" of my book is "that Trott only reached an unequivocally anti-Nazi attitude half-way through the war..." This statement I do not contradict but would qualify. Mr. Astor says earlier in his article that before the war Trott's "real motives were those of attempting peaceful compromise between rival ideologies." That seems correct. Not till his return to Germany in 1940 did Trott see that no compromise with Hitler of any sort was possible.

He was young, patriotic, intensely optimistic. He was an anti-Nazi from 1933, yet he fought (and who but a dolt would deny him sympathy) against the terrible logic of events. This sometimes made his attitude appear equivocal. In a very limited sense it was. But when all his illusions were destroyed, including one about British generosity (at the Casablanca conference), he stuck to his essential anti-Nazi



faith with redoubled resolution. That he found the spiritual reserve to do so gives the measure of his mind and soul. To insist, as some of Trott's friends like to do, understandably enough, but in disregard of a volume of evidence, that there was no deviation

in his view and purpose from first to last seems to me to misinterpret a great story of human fortitude beset with temptation. It is to prefer the anaemic beauties of hagiographic obituary to the daunting poetry of the facts.

## How to Change the System

*On Dr. Mishan's University Reforms — By J. F. MAITLAND-JONES*

DR. E. J. MISHAN is not only so right in much of his argument, but also so timely in expressing it, that one is tempted to overlook the limitations of his "heretical thoughts" [ENCOUNTER, March]. But no one who is not an economist, and surely very few of those who are, can seriously go along with him when he claims that "the current threat to the universities can be removed by simple institutional changes," *i.e.*, by the disclosure of the full, true costs of higher education, and the substitution of loans for student grants. This is a peg-legged argument at best (and our understanding of it is not helped by Dr. Mishan's failure to define his notion of "the threat" facing universities), stumping along in search of the truncated limb on which the support for university reform more sensibly depends.

It may well be good for us to know the value of any article that we purchase (including university education) as distinct from its apparent cost. But even if we know, say, that the true cost of a three-year course in the humanities is £5,000, it is hard to see that any threat to the universities (whether it emanates from government, or from students, or from the dons themselves) is thereby averted. It may well be true, as Dr. Mishan mentions, that a more informed atmosphere of debate on university costs and usefulness will be achieved. But that is another matter.

And one could take Dr. Mishan's proposals for student loans instead of grants more seriously if only he had made some suggestions as to the source of these loans. The question of repayment is crucial in determining who will risk the money, and through what channels. The Local Education Authorities? By the time individual credit-worthiness and the susceptibilities of the rate-payers have been taken into consideration, the beleaguered academic garrison at the L.S.E. will find it has no problems, and no livelihood, and no students either. The normal channels of finance, the banks and hire-purchase houses? They might, if this were finance of the order of a three-piece suite or a tenor saxophone. But if Dr. Mishan expects to recoup the whole of the full-cost pricing then loans must offer sums like £5,000, extend repayments over a lifetime, forgo sizeable deposits, and above all be available to the children of defaulters or criminals or lunatics to whom financial credit (but not necessarily a university education) is normally denied. It is difficult to envisage private enterprise providing the finance under these conditions. But

the whole point would be lost if Government stepped into the breach—because its only reason for doing so would have to be either to offer advantageous terms to those requiring money for university education, or to underwrite the costs of bad debts—in which case it might just as well have stuck to the grants system in the first place.

INTERESTING AS BOTH Dr. Mishan's proposals are, they do nothing by themselves to protect universities from the excesses of government or student power, or students from the vagaries of their teachers and administrators, or society from the dottiness of dons and students' difficulties in settling to adult life—which are the real problems of university life today. As a means of solving these problems, the embryo proposals for an Independent University (that is, independent of government finance and, hence, of government control), seem to me to make much more sense. While they share Dr. Mishan's aim to ascertain and publish the true costs of university education and to induce the individual (*not* the state) to meet these costs, they have been devised to run *concurrently* with the present system, not to supersede it. Thus they provide both students and dons with an area of true choice, where competition for resources (both financial and academic) will ensure that the needs of students, as well as those of their teachers and the outside world, will be met. If they aren't, then for the first time the student will be able to vote with his feet and take his custom elsewhere, back to the existing system. Similarly, supporters of the Independent University propose that dons too should undergo the advantages as well as the penalties of shifting tenure and forgo the safety of lifelong tenure. This proposal, if implemented, should do more than any other to meet students' complaints about those who teach them.

More radically still, supporters of the Independent University look to industry and commerce for the support they do not wish to have to accept from Government. They have yet to make out a strong case why Industry—committed already to support of universities whose academic policies as well as end-products it increasingly distrusts—should open its coffers to supply the wherewithal. But there are, nevertheless, good and compelling reasons why industry and higher education would both benefit from a closer relationship. With the calibre as well as the basic training of recruits from university

frequently criticised, and with the fundamental motives of industry queried as often as they are in academic common rooms, more meaningful contact between the two parties is long overdue. With captains of industry nearly as invisible to the academic world as they are to their own lower echelons, the students' image of middle management intent only on its perks and its pensions is well matched by industry's notions of students and teachers as ineffectual revolutionaries.

To shift these beliefs, and others as fundamental, would require a major exercise of disbelief in most British inherent attitudes. This exercise is long overdue. But it may possibly come about as a result of the fundamental re-thinking involved in setting up the Independent University.

### Popper's "Moral Responsibility"

PROFESSOR KARL POPPER'S "The Moral Responsibility of the Scientist" in the March issue of *ENCOUNTER* is slackly written, confused, and in at least one instance, morally shocking. Professor Popper tells us twice that he has nothing new to say about this topic; and he is right. My only question on this score is why he didn't save space and let the reader have the modest pleasure of discovering this fact for himself. Professor Popper remarks, with evident approval, upon the contention that "the conscience of every human being is the ultimate court of appeal with regard to the question whether a certain command is, or is not, to be resisted." If so, why should not the same hold for the social scientist who, he goes on to say, "has a particular responsibility to warn people of dangers inherent in tools of power and to devote himself to counter measures,"? Similarly, why should everyone have a special responsibility in the field in which he possesses a particular power or knowledge? Why shouldn't everyone be entitled to consult his own conscience in these as in other matters and perhaps decide that he has no such special responsibility? But if (as I myself agree) such responsibilities do weigh heavily upon scientists, who alone *may* be able to gauge the implications of their discoveries, why then can we not blame those who work to "defend" their countries by helping to create such instruments of war as nuclear weapons, poison gases, etc., which can be, have been, and probably will continue to be used indiscriminately against non-combatants as well as combatants?

Furthermore, if the scientist, as a human being, is entitled to decide for himself whether in conscience he is to resist a command, why is not the commander, the politician, including the dictator, not entitled to decide what commands he shall give the scientists?

It seems to me quite monstrous to hold as a general proposition that scientists cannot be blamed for working to defend their countries. It depends entirely upon the country. For my part, I do not at all believe that the scientist, like any other citizen, is always caught in a terrible moral difficulty or that nobody can give him advice when his country

commits such ghastly war crimes as genocide, dropping atomic bombs upon civilian populations, and the rest. In such instances the betrayal of one's country may be a clear moral obligation, as many brave men, scientists as well as non-scientists, have well understood. And here as elsewhere why should we not give our advice to others when they find themselves in moral difficulties? I should have thought not only that we can, but also that we should advise them, especially when it is a matter of life or death for whole defenceless and innocent populations, or, indeed, for the whole human race.

Not only has Professor Popper not advanced our understanding of the issues which confront morally responsible scientists in regard to nuclear and biological warfare, he has added confusion to confusion. In my view a moral philosopher who is also a philosopher of science has himself a special obligation to weigh his words more carefully than Popper has done in this instance. Whereof one has nothing to say, thereof should one remain silent.

HENRY D. AIKEN

*Goldman Professor of Philosophy,  
Brandeis University, Mass.*

THE ISSUES which I discussed in my paper and which are now raised again by Professor Aiken seem to me too serious for personal animosity, and I shall ignore the pinpricks in his letter. Nor do I wish to retaliate when I complain that Professor Aiken's letter, to use his own words, "is slackly written, confused, and in at least one instance morally shocking." I have to make this complaint; for after reading Professor Aiken's letter many times I still do not know for certain what that one instance is to which he is alluding or, indeed, what his arguments are.

The following are the two points which I regard as "shocking": one is the fact that Professor Aiken does not refer to anything by its name (myself excepted), especially not the countries alluded to. While I discussed the war in Viet Nam by name (although it was merely an example from the point of view of my topic), Professor Aiken, whose main topic is this war, never names a country, but operates with mere insinuations.

The second and more important fact is that Professor Aiken cannot imagine that moral issues are not always clear-cut. He sees everything in black and white. For him there can be no clash of obligations, no divided loyalties, no real moral problem. For him the involvement of the United States is not a tragedy; it is merely a crime.

It is only in the light of these observations that his criticism of my paper becomes more or less coherent.

Professor Aiken's protest is provoked, it seems, by my description of the war in Viet Nam (which, I repeat, was definitely not the topic of my paper) as a tragedy, and by my suggestion that it may have started as a genuinely defensive war; that the decision of the United States to intervene may have been due to the intention of the United States

to stand by their allies and by the various countries in East Asia and South Asia whose freedom and independence are threatened by communist attempts at expansion. Remembering the history of Czechoslovakia (to which I referred) and of Hungary, I am inclined to regard these as "good" intentions, though it is easy to see after the event that these intentions were badly served by political and military advice resting on insufficient as well as misinterpreted information. This is why I referred in my paper to the war in Viet Nam as a tragedy; it arose, or so it seems to me, from the wish to help those who were attacked and not from any aggressive intentions.

I readily admit that I may be mistaken in this historical judgment. Like many other people, among them scientists, I am conscious of the fact that I am biased by my sympathies and hopes; and I know that I have not eaten from the tree of knowledge. Thus I am surprised by Professor Aiken's perfect knowledge of good and evil: his glib assurance that it is as clear as daylight that all the wrong is on the one side (that of the unnamed United States) and all the right on the other.

This explains why in his first two paragraphs Professor Aiken tries to interpret my reference to individual conscience as an approval of moral relativism, arguing (see his second paragraph) that everybody may justify any crime by claiming that he acted in accordance with his conscience. Thus, he suggests, an appeal to conscience establishes irresponsibility. Since this rests on an almost incredible perversion of what I said, I must quote myself (pp. 54-56 of the March ENCOUNTER):

It was the politicians and the law officers of the various Allied countries who staged the Nuremberg Trials which established the status of war crimes and thereby recognised that the conscience of every human being is the ultimate court of appeal with respect to the question whether a certain command is, or is not, to be resisted. Without contradicting themselves it is impossible for these same politicians and law officers now to assert that it is the duty of the citizen, and of the scientist, not to ask the reason why and to obey any command. The freedom for which we must be prepared to fight is precisely the freedom to resist a command which we feel it would be criminal to obey. It is, I believe, the inescapable duty of every loyal politician in a democracy... to champion the rights of the conscientious objector, whether he is a scientist or a soldier.

It should be very clear from this that I pleaded here unambiguously for *individual responsibility rather than irresponsibility*. As to Professor Aiken's somewhat abstract question whether a doctrine of conscience logically suffices to establish this plea I was noncommittal in this passage; but earlier I discussed the status of the principle of minimisation of suffering.

The long passage just quoted shows that I support

unambiguously those who feel that there are circumstances in which the refusal to support their country "may be a clear moral obligation, as many brave men, scientists as well as non-scientists, have well understood." (See the middle of Professor Aiken's third paragraph where he insinuates that this is not my view.)

Towards the end of his first paragraph, Professor Aiken writes: "Why then can we not blame those who work to 'defend' their countries by helping to create such instruments of war as nuclear weapons, poison gases, etc. . . ?" And he repeats this view at the beginning of his third paragraph: "It seems to me quite monstrous to hold as a general proposition that scientists cannot be blamed for working to defend their countries." I too think that this is quite monstrous as a *general proposition*—unless the word "defend" is taken seriously, and the scientists are engaged in genuine defence. (By putting "defend" in the first of the two passages between quotation marks, Professor Aiken insinuates that the scientists who created the atom bomb were not *bona fide* engaged in genuinely defensive work.) My own sentence to which these two quotations from Professor Aiken refer made this quite clear; for I wrote (p. 54):

A scientist who feels that his country is threatened by an attack cannot be blamed for working to defend his country. However, even a just war may get utterly out of hand, and it seems to me unlikely that there can be . . . a war without war crimes on both sides. Thus, once a war has started, the scientist, like any other citizen, is caught in a terrible moral difficulty, and nobody can give him advice.

I did not say, of course, as Professor Aiken suggests in his third paragraph "that the scientist, like any other citizen, is *always* caught in a terrible moral difficulty"; if the "*always*" (my italics) is added, the meaning of what I said is perverted almost into its opposite. What I was trying to make clear was that there are situations in which simple general moral rules may, because of a genuine clash of moral obligations, break down.

It did not occur to me that my paper would be read by anybody to whom this obvious fact would be new. In this I was mistaken.

KARL R. POPPER

University of London

## Moravagine

As a geologist, I hope no one takes seriously Blaise Cendrars' ideas about pre-history [ENCOUNTER, November, 1968]. As he, himself, says in the preceding paragraph: "What nonsense!"

R. B. KING

Esher, Surrey

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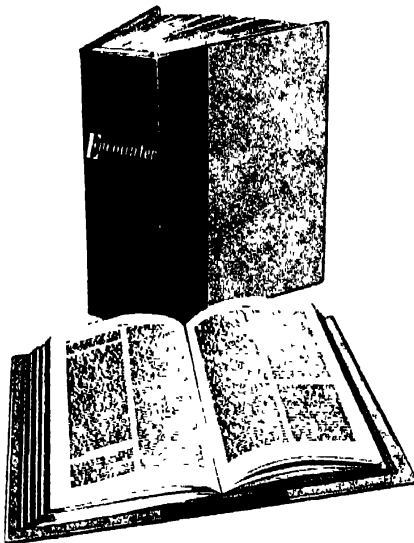
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## Two Hitherto Unknown Pieces by D. H. Lawrence

IN 1964, Dr. Armin Arnold of McGill University wrote an article in *P.M.L.A.* identifying Lawrence's first two critical essays—reviews of H. G. Fiedler's *Oxford Book of German Verse*, and Jethro Bithell's *The Minnesingers*, both of which appeared in the January 1912 number of the *English Review*, and which can now be found in *Phoenix II*. Dr. Arnold based his identification on two passages in Lawrence's letters (*The Collected Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, edited by Harry T. Moore, London, 1962):

I have got to review a book of German poetry and a book of Minnesinger translations. I like the German poetry, but not the translations. [to May Chambers Holbrook, 6 Dec. 1911]

And

The *English Review* . . . asked me to write an article on modern German poetry. . . . I should love doing it myself if I knew enough about it. (*Nicht war*—I have reviewed, in England, two anthologies of modern German poetry.) [to Else Jaffe, 10 Feb. 1913]

This second quotation raises a problem, since Bithell's *The Minnesingers* can hardly be called an anthology of "modern German poetry." Another reference in *Letters*, which Dr. Arnold overlooked, I think explains all.

There is a review by me in the *English (Review)* of this month. [to Ada Lawrence Clarke, 8 Nov. 1911]

There is, in the *English Review* for November 1911, pp. 721-724, an anonymous review of *Contemporary German Poetry*, selected and translated by Jethro Bithell.<sup>1</sup> It is obviously by

<sup>1</sup> *Contemporary German Poetry*. Selected and translated by JETHRO BITHELL, M.A. Walter Scott Publishing Co., 1911.

<sup>2</sup> *Contemporary Belgian Poetry*. Selected and translated by JETHRO BITHELL. "Canterbury Poets" series. Walter Scott Publishing Co., Ltd., 1911.

Lawrence. Among other factors, it reflects his recent reading of Greek tragedies in Gilbert Murray's translations. It appears to be his first published piece of literary criticism.

THIS *Contemporary German Poetry* is very much like the recent *Contemporary Belgian Poetry*.<sup>2</sup> The bulk of the verse is of the passionate or violent kind. This may be largely owing to the author's taste. His own poem, which dedicates the volume to Richard Dehmel, contains "Clashing Clouds that Terrorise" and "Feverous Sands of Modern Ache." However, we accept the collection as representative.

It is remarkable how reminiscent of Verhaeren and Iwan Gilkin, and the like, these poems sound. Either it is owing to the translation, or else the influence of the Belgians on Germany is beyond all proportion. The very subjects of many of these poems could be found in the Belgian book, wearing the same favour. These poets seem like little brothers of Verhaeren and Albert Mockel and the rest, young lads excitedly following the lead of their scandalous elders. Baudelaire, a while back, sent round with a rather red lantern, showing it into dark corners, and saying "Look here!"; considerably startling most folk. Verhaeren comes after with a bull's-eye lantern of whiter, wider ray than Baudelaire's artistic beam, and flashes this into such obscure places—by no means corners—so that they stand out stark and real. He also, in the daylight, makes a hollow of his hand, and shades his eyes, and sees, deep in the light, the fabric of shadow. These Germans follow like tourists after a guide. They stop at the places Verhaeren stopped at; they excitedly hold out their candle lanterns; they peer under

hollowed hands to find the shadow set deep in the light.

This may be the fault of the translator, though it scarcely seems likely. He speaks of "the beautiful translation of the poem "Grey," the work of Miss H. Friederichs:

#### GREY

*Gowns of soft grey I now will wear,  
Like willow trees all silvery fair;  
My lover, he loves grey.  
Like clematis, with silky down,  
Which lend the dew-sprent hedge a crown;  
My lover, he loves grey.*

*Wrapped in a dream, I watch where slow  
Within the fire the wood-sparks glow;  
My love, thou art away...  
The soft grey ashes fall and shift,  
Through silent spaces smoke clouds drift,  
And I too, I love grey.*

*I think of pearls, where grey lights dream,  
Of alders, where the mist-veils gleam:  
My love, thou art away...  
Of grey-haired men of high renown,  
Whose faded locks were hazel brown,  
And I too, I love grey.*

*The little grey moth turns its flight  
Into the room allured by light;  
My lover, he loves grey.  
O, little moth, we are like thee,  
We all fly round a light we see  
In swamp or Milky Way.*

After that, one thinks of Verlaine's "Green."

The Germans in this book are very interesting, not so much for the intrinsic value of the pieces of poetry here given, as for showing which way the poetic spirit trends in Germany, where she finds her stuff, and how she lifts it. Synge asks for the brutalising of English poetry. Thomas Hardy and George Meredith have, to some extent, answered. But in point of brutality the Germans—and they at the heels of the French and Belgians—are miles ahead of us; or at the back of us, as the case may be.

With Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Verhaeren, poetry seems to have broken out afresh, like a new crater. These men take life welling out hot and primitive, molten fire, or mud, or smoke, or strange vapour. But at any rate it comes from the central fire, which feeds all of us with life, although it is gloved, clotted over and hidden by earth and greenery and civilisation. And it is this same central well of fire which the Germans are trying to tap. It is risky, and they lose their heads when they feel the heat. But sometimes one sees the real red jet of it, pure flame and beautiful; and often, the

hot mud—but that is kin. Why do we set our faces against this tapping of elemental passion? It must, in its first issuing, be awful and perhaps, ugly. But what is more essentially awful and ugly than Oedipus? And why is sex passion unsuited for handling, if hate passion, and revenge passion, and horror passion are suitable, as in Agamemnon and Oedipus, and Medea. Hate passion, horror passion, revenge passion no longer move us so violently in life. Love passion, pitching along with it beauty and strange hate and suffering, remains the one living volcano of our souls. And we must be passionate, we are told. Why, then, not take this red fire out of the well, equally with the yellow of horror, and the dark of hate? Intrinsically, Verhaeren is surely nearer the Greek dramatists than is Swinburne.

The Germans indeed are sentimental. They always belittle the great theme of passion. In this book, one turns with disgust from Dehmel's "Venus Pandemos." It is like the lurid tales the teetotallers tell against drink. And one turns with impatience from Peter Hille's "Morn of a Marriage Night." It is the slop of philosophy muddled and mixed with a half-realised experience: the poet was not able to *imagine* the woman, so he slopped over the suggestion of her with sentimental philosophy. It is not honest, it [is] as bad as jerry work in labour. But that doesn't say the subject is wrong. And if the work is offensive, we can wash our hands after it. And it does not mean to say that no man shall try to treat a difficult subject because another man has degraded it. Because a subject cannot be degraded. Sex passion is not degraded even now, between priests and beasts. Verhaeren, at his best, is religious in his attitude, honest and religious, when dealing with the "scandalous" subject. Many of the Germans are not; they are sentimental, dishonest. So much the worse for them, not for us.

The translation of these poems is not remarkably good; but good enough, as a rule, to transfer the rhythm and progress of the feeling of each poem. A perfect translator must be a twin of his original author, like in feeling and age, and even in the turn of his expression and the knack of his phrases. It is absurd to think of translating the spirit and form of a whole host of poets. But here, each poem retains its personality, some of its distinct, individual personality, that it had in the original. The translator is best when he has the plain curve of an emotion—preferably dramatic—to convey.

ANOTHER REFERENCE in the *Letters* needs explaining. It is in a letter to Edward Garnett (13 October 1914):

We have a little money—not much—enough—Pinker sold “Honour and Arms” [*i.e.*, “The Prussian Officer”] to America for £25, and I had a little from the *Manchester Guardian*.

There is a “backpage” article called “With the Guns” by H. D. (*sic*) Lawrence in the *Manchester Guardian* for Tuesday, 18 August 1914. Again, it is obviously by Lawrence. The situation at the opening of the article is that described by Lawrence in a letter to Lady Cynthia Asquith (?31 January 1915), and the ending of the article is similar to the first version of *England My England*. (It is quite different from the pub-

lished version—more emphasis on the horror and brutality of death, rather than its inevitability. It can be found in the *English Review* for October 1915.)

There is also external evidence that the article is by Lawrence. *The Guardian*’s Librarian, Mr. F. B. Singleton, has kindly checked the account book for that period which shows a payment of two guineas as being made to D. H. Lawrence on 25 September 1914 for an article of this title and date. It is not known whether the signature in print was a compositor’s error, or Lawrence’s wish. (The article is not entered in Professor Warren Roberts’ *Soho Bibliography* because at the time when Professor Roberts enquired of the *Guardian* about the reference in the letter, the account book of the period was temporarily lost.)

## II—With the Guns

THE RESERVISTS were leaving for London by the nine o’clock train. They were young men, some of them drunk. There was one hawling and brawling before the ticket window; there were two swaying on the steps of the subway shouting, and ending, “Let’s go an’ have another afore we go.” There were a few women seeing off their sweethearts and brothers, but, on the whole, the reservist had been a lodger in the town and had only his own pals. One woman stood before the carriage window. She and her sweetheart were being very matter-of-fact, cheerful, and burpious over the parting.

“Well, so long!” she cried as the train began to move. “When you see ’em let ’em have it.”

“Ay, no fear,” shouted the man, and the train was gone, the man grinning.

I thought what it would really be like, “when he saw ’em.”

LAST AUTUMN I followed the Bavarian army down the Isar valley and near the foot of the Alps. Then I could see what war would be like—an affair entirely of machines, with men attached to the machines as the subordinate part thereof, as the butt is the part of a rifle.

I remember standing on a little round hill one August afternoon. There was a beautiful blue sky, and white clouds from the mountains. Away on the right, amid woods and corn-clad hills, lay the big Starnberg lake. This is just a year ago, but it seems to belong to some period outside of time.

On the crown of the little hill were three quick-firing guns, with the gunners behind. At the side, perched up on a tiny platform at the top of a high pair of steps, was an officer looking through a fixed spy-glass. A little further behind, lower down the hill, was a group of horses and soldiers.

Every moment came the hard, tearing, hideous voice of the German command from the officer perched aloft, giving the range to the guns; and then the sharp cry, “Fire!” There was a burst, something in the guns started back, the faintest breath of vapour disappeared. The shots had gone.

I watched, but I could not see where they had gone, nor what had been aimed at. Evidently they were directed against an enemy a mile and a half away, men unseen by any of the soldiers at the guns. Whether the shot they fired hit or missed, killed or did not touch, I and the gun-party did not know. Only the officer was shouting the range again, the guns were again starting back, we were again staring over the face of the green and dappled, inscrutable country into which the missiles sped unseen.

What work was there to do?—only mechanically to adjust the guns and fire the shot. What was there to feel?—only the unnatural suspense and suppression of serving a machine which, for aught we knew, was killing our fellow-men, whilst we stood there, blind, without knowledge or participation, subordinate to the cold machine. This was the glamour and the



glory of the war: blue sky overhead and living green country all around, but we, amid it all, a part in some iron insensate will, our flesh and blood, our soul and intelligence shed away, and all that remained of us a cold, metallic adherence to an iron machine. There was neither ferocity nor joy nor exultation nor exhilaration nor even quick fear: only a mechanical, expressionless movement.

And this is how the gunner would "let 'em have it." He would mechanically move a certain apparatus when he heard a certain shout. Of the result he would see and know nothing. He had nothing to do with it.

Then I remember going at night down a road, whilst the sound of guns thudded continuously. And suddenly I started, seeing the bank of the road stir. It was a mass of scarcely visible forms, lying waiting for a rush. They were lying under fire, silent, scarcely stirring, a mass. If one of the shells that were supposed to be coming had dropped among them it would have burst a hole in the mass. Who would have been torn, killed, no one would have known. There would just have been a hole in the living shadowy mass; that was all. Who it was did not matter. There were no individuals, and every individual soldier knew it. He was a fragment of a mass, and as a fragment of a mass he must live or die or be torn. He had no rights, no self, no being. There was only the mass lying there, solid and obscure along the bank of the road in the night.

This was how the gunner "would let 'em have it." A shell would fall into this mass of vulnerable bodies, there would be a torn hole in the mass. This would be his "letting 'em have it."

And I remember a captain of the *bersaglieri* who talked to me in the train in Italy when he had come back from Tripoli. The Italian soldier, he said, was the finest soldier in the world at a rush. But—and he spoke with a certain horror that cramped his voice—when it came to lying there under the Snyder fire you had to stand behind them with a revolver. And I saw he could not get beyond the agony of this.

"Well," I said, "that is because they cannot feel themselves parts of a machine. They have all the old natural courage, when one rushes at one's enemy. But it is unnatural to them to lie still under machine-fire. It is unnatural to anybody. War with machines, and the machine

predominant, is too unnatural for an Italian. It is a wicked thing, a machine, and your Italians are too naturally good. They will do anything to get away from it. Let us see our enemy and go for him. But we cannot endure this taking death out of machines, and giving death out of machines, our blood cold, without any enemy to rise against."

I remember also standing on a little hill crowned by a white church. This hill was defended, surrounded by a trench half-way down. In this trench stood the soldiers side by side, down there in the earth, a great line of them.

The night came on. Suddenly, on the other side, high up in the darkness, burst a beautiful greenish globe of light, and then came into being a magic circle of countryside set in darkness, a greenish jewel of landscape, splendid bulk of trees, a green meadow, vivid. The ball fell and it was dark, and in one's eye remained treasured the little vision that had appeared far off in the darkness. Then again a light ball burst and sloped down. There was the white farm-house with the wooden, slanting roof, the green apple trees, the orchard paling, a jewel, a landscape set deep in the darkness. It was beautiful beyond belief. Then it was dark. Then the searchlights suddenly sprang upon the countryside, revealing the magic, fingering everything with magic, pushing the darkness aside, showing the lovely hillsides, the noble bulks of trees, the pallor of corn. A searchlight was creeping at us. It slid up our hill. It was upon us; we turned our backs to it, it was unendurable. Then it was gone.

Then out of a little wood at the foot of the hill came the intolerable crackling and bursting of rifles. The men in the trenches returned fire. Nothing could be seen. I thought of the bullets that would find their marks. But whose bullets? And what mark? Why must I fire off my gun in the darkness towards a noise? Why must a bullet come out of the darkness, breaking a hole in me? But better a bullet than the laceration of a shell, if it came to dying. But what is it all about? I cannot understand; I am not to understand. My God, why am I a man at all, when this is all, this machinery piercing and tearing?

It is a war of artillery, a war of machines, and men no more than the subjective material of the machine. It is so unnatural as to be unthinkable. Yet we must think of it.

George Steiner

# The Language Animal

BEES DANCE EXACT MESSAGES to each other as to the direction, amount and quality of honey found. Dolphin pipe signals of warning or summons. It may be that the trills and whistles of birds convey rudimentary meaning. Meaning, in fact, is the essence, the underlying structure of natural forms. Colours, sequences, odours, regularities or salient anomalies of shape and event, all are informant. Almost every phenomenon can be "read" and classed as a statement. It signals danger or solicitation, lack or availability of nourishment; it points towards or away from other significant structures. Living beings, above elementary units, dispose of a large, manifold range of articulation: postures, gestures, colorations, tonalities, secretions, facial mien. Separately or in conjunction these communicate a message, a unit or unit-cluster of focused information. Life proceeds amid an incessant network of signals. To survive is to receive a sufficient number of such signals, to sort out from the random flux those literally vital to oneself and one's species, and to decode the pertinent signals with sufficient speed and accuracy. An organism failing to do so, either because its receptors are blunted or because it "misreads," will perish. A marmot dies when it misreads, *i.e.*, fails to decode accurately, the message of tint, odour, or texture which differentiates the statement of identity of a venomous mushroom from that of an edible variety. A walker in the city, crossing streets, would not survive if he mistranslated the coded message of red and green—either through some organic deficiency (colour-blindness) or because the relevant arbitrary idiom, *red/stop green/go*, had not been taught or had slipped his memory.

<sup>1</sup>The standard work on all this is, of course, Karl von Frisch's *The Dance Language and Orientation of Bees* (1967).

All identity is active statement. It communicates its being to the surrounding world through a set of more or less clear, impressive, and complicated signals. We *are* so far as we can declare ourselves to be, and have full assurance of our asserted existence only when other identities register and reciprocate our life-signals. Signals of elemental individuation: "I am, I am in this place, and of this time." Signals of prime need: "These are my foods, these are the prey I seek in order to live." Signals of defence: "My weapons are this smell, these claws, this spine, these means of camouflage. Approach at your risk." What cannot be communicated, what cannot state its ontological existence and minimal demands, is not alive. "Myself it speaks and spells." It is in the reciprocal nature of the statement of identity, in the need for echo, be it savagely contrary, to confirm one's own being, that lies the root of the Hegelian paradox: the need of one living entity for the presence of another, and the fear and hate engendered by that need.

But, to repeat: the natural modes of information are immensely diverse and susceptible of fantastic refinement. In the message-flight of the bee the exact angle matters;<sup>1</sup> each beck and volte in the courtship minuet of the moor-hen is an expression of coded meaning; very probably, a pointer can "read" accurately hundreds of gradations of smell.

*Comme de longs échos qui de loin se confon-  
dent  
Dans une ténébreuse et profonde unité,  
Vaste comme la nuit et comme la clarté,  
Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répon-  
dent.*

Long before man the planet was many-hued, loud and odorous with statement and reply. We know of fossils three thousand million years old. The development of specific information

codes, of signal-systems through which emitter and receiver could formulate and exchange messages of identity, need and sexual correlation, cannot be much younger. Where there is multicellular life, where different phyla co-exist and compete, there is, there has to be, the articulation of meaning. Only the inert is mute. Only total death has no statement to make.

I HAVE NOT UNTIL NOW used the word *language*. An enormous mass of information, of extreme subtlety and specificity, is formulated, transmitted, received and understood at every point in the life-process. Non-linguistic codes have a far longer history than man. Gesture, bodily stance, the display of certain colours not only precede language but continue to surround and, as it were, infiltrate it at every level (a deaf-mute in mourning garb is making an emphatic and possibly quite complex statement). A world without words can be, and where organic forms are present must be, a world full of messages. Language is only one, and probably the most recent, of a great sum of expressive codes. Not only do these other codes persist; they may well outlive language. A post-human planet, so long as zoological phenomena endure, will teem with significant, conventionalised communication as did the earth in the palaeozoic. After man there will not be silence.

But the uniqueness of language, the fact that it has existed over what is by geological and biological standards a paltry time-span, the fact that it is only one specialised mechanism of information-storage and conveyance among a host of others, is crucial. It directs us to the decisive recognition that *language* and *man* are correlate, that they imply and necessitate each other.

Other codes used by higher animals may be of remarkable sophistication; in certain regards, such as the memorisation and exact decipherment of scent and sound, they may be speedier and more economic than speech. But they are not like language. Language, with its genius and limitations, is unique to man. No other signal-system is at all comparable, or as Noam Chomsky says, "language appears to be a unique phenomenon, without significant analogue in the animal world."<sup>3</sup> One cannot overstate this fundamental all-determining point. Not at a time when it is the fashion to describe man as a "naked ape" or a biological species

whose main motives of conduct are territorial in the animal sense. The Darwinism of such arguments is more naïve than that of T. H. Huxley who, towards the close of his life, noted that nothing in the theory of natural selection had accounted for the root fact of human speech. We are, as Hesiod and Xenophon may have been among the first to say, "an animal, a life-form that speaks." Or, as Herder put it, *ein Geschöpf der Sprache*—a "language creature" and, at the same time, a creation of language. Man's "manness," human identity as he can state it to himself and to others, is a speech-function. This is the condition that "separates him, by an immense gap, from all other animate beings. Language is his quiddity and determines his pre-eminence. Other species build and war; others develop kinship patterns and have devised the mystery of play. Some, if evidence is right, may even produce rudiments of non-functional art. In blood-chemistry and life-cycle, primates are man's proximate shadow. But he alone speaks language or, as Chomsky formulates it, does not select "a signal from a finite behavioural repertoire, innate or learned." No view of man's nature which fails to register this essential distinction, which fails to make of our inward and outward linguistic state its starting-point, is adequate to the facts.

## The Implications of a Scandal

THE IMPLICATIONS are so numerous and far-reaching that we are often hardly aware of them. It requires a fairly strenuous act of extrapolation to see our primarily linguistic dimension, to step momentarily outside our own skin.

Man's capacity to articulate a future tense—in itself a metaphysical and logical scandal—his ability and need to "dream forward," to hope, make him unique.<sup>3</sup> Such capacity is inseparable from grammar, from the conventional power of language to exist in advance of that which it designates. Our sense of the past, not as immediately, innately acquired reflexes, but as a shaped selection of remembrance, is again radically linguistic. History, in the human sense, is a language-net cast backward.<sup>4</sup> No animal remembers historically; its temporality is the eternal present tense of the speechless. Our sexuality is shot through with the stimulus and "competing reality" of language. It may well be that our love-making does not differ very much from that of the great apes. But this is to say little. Through its verbalised imaginings, through the rich context of pre-physical and para-physical erotic exchange in which it takes place, human intercourse (a term obviously akin

<sup>3</sup> Noam Chomsky, in *Language and Mind* (1968).

<sup>3</sup> This notion of the philosophically "scandalous" nature of the future tense is explored by Ernst Bloch in *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (1959), and his *Tübingener Einleitung in die Philosophie* (1963).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Thorleif Boman: *Das hebraische Denken im Vergleich mit dem griechischen* (1965).

to "discourse") has a profoundly linguistic character.<sup>5</sup> Correlatively, changes of verbal convention, removals or alterations of speech taboos in regard to erotic statement, affect our most intimate, our most immediately physiological sexual conduct. One need only note the correlations between onanism and interior speech or monologue to realise that eros is, in man, a complex idiom, a semantic act involving the entirety of the *persona*.

If recent structural anthropology is right (and its hypotheses in fact elaborate the suppositions of Leibniz and Herder), those kinship models, \*those conventions of mutual identification which underlie all human society, depend vitally on the availability and growth of language. Man's passage from a natural to a cultural state—the single major act in his history—is at every point interwoven with his speech faculties. Incest taboos and the consequent kinship systems that make possible the definition and bio-social survival of a community, do not precede language. They most probably evolve with and through it. We cannot prohibit that which we cannot name. Exogamic or endogamic marriage rules can only be formulated and, what is no less important, transmitted where an adequate syntax and verbal taxonomy exist. Language forms quite literally underlie and perpetuate human behaviour. The prevalence of promiscuous mating and incest in animals, a prevalence which makes it impossible to speak of "animal cultures" in any but a loosely metaphoric way, is almost certainly a function of the absence of animal languages.<sup>6</sup>

I WOULD GO FURTHER. Our mechanisms of identity—the enormously intricate procedures of recognition and delimitation which allow me to say that *I am I*, to experience myself, and which, concomitantly, bar me from "experiencing you" except by imaginative projection, by an inferential fiction of similitude—are thoroughly grounded in the fact of language. I suspect that these mechanisms evolved slowly and agonisingly, perhaps over millennia. The recognition of self as against "otherness" is an achievement of formidable difficulty and consequence. The legends of reciprocal denomination which we find all over the earth (Jacob and the

Angel, Oedipus and the Sphinx, Roland and Oliver), the motif of mortal combat which ceases only when the antagonists reveal their own names or name each other in an exchange of certified identity, may have in them the shadowy intimation of a long doubt: who am I, who are you, how are we to know that our identities are stable, that we shall not flow into "otherness" as do wind and light and water? Even now, identity remains a threatened possession: in the autistic child (so critical a case for anyone interested in the interdependence of language and humanity) and in the schizoid, certainty of self has failed to mature or has broken down.<sup>7</sup> In constant affirmation of ego, we project on other human beings the silhouette of our presence. The whole process, statement of self and response by the "non-self," is dialectic in structure and linguistic in nature. Speech is the systole and diastole of sustained being; it gives inward and outward proof. I establish and preserve my experience of self by a stream of internalised address. I realise my unconscious, so far as dreams or the sudden rifts of delirium permit, by listening for and amplifying "upward" shreds of discourse, of verbal static, from the dim and middle of the psyche. We do not speak *to ourselves* so much as *speak ourselves*. We provide our self-consciousness with its only and constantly renewed guarantee of particular survival by beaming a current of words inward. Even when we are outwardly mute, speech is active within and our skull is like an echo-chamber. Correspondingly, we establish the existence of *l'autre*, and our existence for it, by means of linguistic give and take. All dialogue is a proffer of mutual cognisance and a strategic re-definition of self. The Angel names Jacob at the end of their long match, the Sphinx compels Oedipus to name himself, to know himself as man. Nothing destroys us more surely than the silence of another human being. Hence Lear's insensate fury against Cordelia, or Kafka's insight that several have survived the song of the Sirens, but none their silence.

IN A SENSE THAT CUTS much deeper than semantics, our identity is a first person pronoun. Monotheism, that transcendental magnification of the image of the human self, acknowledges this truth when it defines God by a grammatical tautology: "I am that I am." Neo-Platonism and Gnosticism take the process of linguistic-ontological relationship a step further: "I am the Word, the *Logos* that calls itself and all else into immediate being. I create the world by naming it." Adam is nearest to the divine nature, is most wholly in God's image, when he re-enacts this lexical *poiesis*: "whatsoever

<sup>5</sup> It is for this reason that such defenders of Sade as Roland Barthes argue that extreme eroticism always represents a linguistic act.

<sup>6</sup> Yvan Simonis, *Claude Lévi-Strauss ou la "Passion de l'Inceste"* (1968).

<sup>7</sup> No one concerned with the philosophy of language can afford to overlook Dr. Bruno Bettelheim's study of autistic children in *The Empty Fortress* (1967).

Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. . . ."

In short, the least inadequate definition we can arrive at of the genus *homo*, the definition that fully distinguishes him from all neighbouring life-forms, is this: man is a *zoon phonanta*, a language-animal. And there is no other like him.

### "When" and "How"

THE "WHEN" AND "HOW" of this uniqueness have been the subject of endless speculation. From Plato to the present, myths and theories about the origins of human speech abound. We seem no nearer to an answer.

Honesty forces us to admit [writes Chomsky] that we are as far today as Descartes was three centuries ago from understanding just what enables a human to speak in a way that is innovative, free from stimulus control, and also appropriate and coherent. . . . Neither physics nor biology nor psychology gives us any clue as to how to deal with these matters.

It may be that all enquiry into the origins and determinant sub-structure of language has skirted a cardinal dilemma: to enquire into the sources of language by using language (what other instruments have we?) may, necessarily, be a circular process, a juggling with mirrors. Unable, conceptually, to transcend its own linguistic terms of reference, the question begs any conceivable answer. Imagining, as we do, verbally, it may be impossible for us to formulate a condition prior to words. We can, formally, state such a priority, but it will be void of active meaning as is a blind man's notion of colour. It may be that the entire image of "linguistic gradualism," of a stage by stage advance from pre- or proto-linguistic man to the articulate being we know, is naïve in the extreme. If the concepts of "man" and of "language" are interdependent for their existence, "pre-language man" is a meaningless chimera. Man becomes man as he enters on a linguistic stage. At the outset, in the penumbra of diffuse, threatened identity, speech was probably focused inward; man declared himself only to himself. Verbal exchange, the partial release of the treasure of words into another man's hearing

and keeping, may well have come much later. We shall never know. But the question should be seen for what it is: when we ask when or how language began, we are in fact asking "what are the origins of man's humanity"?

Because of this overlap, because any theory of the coming of language is a theory about man's entrance into history, about his passage from an unchanging biological present into the grammar of past, present and future, recent work in linguistics, genetics and social anthropology exhibits interesting points of contact. And it might just be that Chomsky overstates the case when he says that neither physics nor biology can give us any clue.

It no longer seems that cranial volume is by itself decisive to man's achievement of humanity. What matters is the development and activation (or development through activation) of electro-chemical hook-ups between as many as possible of the ca. one hundred million cells in the brain. Gradations of intensified humanity may be seen as a function of the enlarged use of the cortex. Understood somatically, Nietzsche's imperative *werde was du bist* signifies "harness more and more of your cortex, activate more and more of the total potential of filaments and contact points between neural centres." Presumably, the entire process is one of feed-back: as the needle "finds" and deepens into sound previously imperceptible grooves, so new cerebral requirements engender or trigger new circuits. Life is a coming into being—more or less achieved—of the potential self.

In this self-sustaining dynamism, information is of the essence. Its storage, coding, transmission, and reception are the anatomy of consciousness. (This allows one to say, at a more obvious level, that the larger a man's vocabulary, the more resourceful his syntax, the greater will be his possession of self and the sum of reality on which he can draw.)<sup>8</sup> "Information" is the key term in those models now being used by both molecular biology and linguistics. I realise that the striking analogies of idiom in these two disciplines are, in part, a result of shared metaphor, that they ought not to be over-emphasised. But they are also, in part, cognitive, and one cannot deny the possibility of mutual relevance.<sup>9</sup>

IT DOES APPEAR, on present and manifestly preliminary evidence, as if certain electro-chemical and neuro-chemical processes of mental life might be "semantically" structured. Sensory input, storage, scanning and subsequent response seem to occur in some kind of syntactical sequence; neither the neuro-chemistry of the human brain nor any human language seems to contain what modern linguists call "structure-

<sup>8</sup> As early as the 1900s "self-improvement" courses and nostrums began capitalising on the insight that "more words will make you a bigger man."

<sup>9</sup> Cf. E. H. Lenneberg, "A Biological Perspective of Language" in *New Directions in the Study of Language* (1966).

independent operations." This may be an important clue. There seems to be, in a sense more than imagistic, a grammar of life-processes, an organic templet from whose sequential organisation and genetic activity in man language naturally arises. Language, in turn, reacts on, feeds back to, its physiological matrix. Or to put it another way, the use of language of itself activates the substratum of linguistic potentiality. More and more synapses, more and more fibres of interrelation are woken into being. In the use of metaphor—a fact of language which Plato recognised as somehow crucial to human excellence—the neuro-physiological and the verbal seem to touch very closely. Metaphor ignites a new arc of perceptive energy. It relates hitherto unrelated areas of experience; such new relation may have a direct organic counterpart as hitherto separate centres of memory and scanning in the cortex are brought "into circuit."<sup>10</sup>

Information, feed-back, coding and de-coding, punctuation so as to ensure the right reading of electro-chemical messages—these are notions shared, at least in part, by molecular biology and generative grammar. The coincidence, in time, of the break-through in genetics and of modern structural linguistics from Saussure to Harris and Chomsky does not look accidental.<sup>11</sup> An intimation of life as language, as transmitted information, was in the air. The two currents are congruent. If, as Chomsky proposes, linguistic universals—those orderings which allow us immediately to differentiate what is possible in a language from what is not—"must simply be a biological property of the human mind," then it is likely that the biology of the mind is itself "syntactical."<sup>12</sup> Genetics would be, as some already assert, a special case of information theory. Undoubtedly the relevant physics and chemistry are of an order of complication beyond our present grasp; and it may well be that our whole concept of what is "physical" and "material" may have to be rethought and made far subtler than it now is.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. E. H. Lenneberg, *Biological Foundations of Language* (1967).

<sup>11</sup> It is Professor Zellig Harris of the University of Pennsylvania who initiates the new linguistics in his *Methods in Structural Linguistics* (1951).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Noam Chomsky's discussion with Stuart Hampshire (*The Listener*, 30 May 1968).

<sup>13</sup> For a recent treatment of this "*particolarismo arcaico*" see Ferruccio Rossi-Landi "*Ideologie della relatività linguistica*" (*Ideologie* 4, 1968).

<sup>14</sup> I am fully aware that such ethnolinguists as Professor Dell Hymes (see *Language in Culture & Society*, 1964), believe that cultural variety accounts for the immense number and diversity of tongues. But so "anti-economic" a phenomenon does seem to me to require further explanation and, possibly, an entirely different theoretic model.

But in that future psycho-physiology, the matter of the biological foundations of language will play a decisive role. We may come to understand how, and in what ways, the levels of genetic specificity and sophistication at work in human heredity carry with them—and are carried by—a unique communicative code. In a manner we cannot as yet formulate, with our blunt tools of introspection, it may be that human speech is in some way a counterpart to that decoding and translation of the neuro-chemical idiom which defines and perpetuates our biological existence. The next dimension of psychology, the step that may at last take us beyond a primitive mind/body empiricism, could well be semantic.

A SUBSIDIARY, THOUGH HARDLY LESS difficult, set of questions arises from the fact of the multiplicity of human languages. Why so many? (Three thousand according to some classifications, nearly four thousand according to others.) The myth of Babel suggests an early awareness that there is a puzzle here, a curious mystery of waste. But even in Humboldt's great essay, *Ueber die Verschiedenheit des Menschlichen Sprachbaues* (1830–35), the question is not posed with sufficient rigour or pressed home.

Why this fantastic diversity of human tongues, making it difficult for communities, often geographically proximate and racially or culturally similar, to communicate? How can such exceeding variety have arisen if, as transformational grammar postulates and biology hints, the underlying grid, the neuro-physiological grooves, are common to all men and, indeed occasion their humanity. Why, as carriers of the same essential molecular information, do we not speak the same language or a small number of languages corresponding, say, to the small number of genuinely identifiable ethnic types?<sup>13</sup>

No one has come up with a satisfactory hypothesis, and it is a signal weakness in generative grammar that Chomsky and his colleagues do not recognise the full scope and importance of the question. How "universal," in fact, are their invariants? And if linguistic universals are a simple, determined biological datum, why the immense number and consequent mutual incomprehensibility of local transformations? Natural and evolutionary mechanisms are, in general, economic. The great variety of fauna and flora is by no means inefficient; it represents a naturally selected, maximalised efficiency of adjustment to local need and ecology. We cannot say the same of the world's profusion of mutually incomprehensible tongues. There is a stubborn mystery here, and one that may lead a very long way back.<sup>14</sup>

Evidence suggests that, if anything, the number of different languages was even higher in the past than it is now. Within living memory, scores of ancient and elaborate languages have been snuffed out. There are many South American Indian languages which live, today, only in the recollection, often imperfect, of a handful of informants. The pressures of technological uniformity and the ever-increasing premium put on rapid, unambiguous communication, are eroding the language atlas. Does this diminution, this likelihood of an even greater linguistic proliferation in the past, give a lead? We don't know. One can imagine, but without much cogency, a state in which verbal articulation was almost completely private or esoteric. Each more or less closed knot of human beings, each clan of kinship nucleus on its way to becoming a society, may have had its own speech and guarded the magic of that speech from contamination. We know still of communities which use an ancient idiom internally while sharing a more recent vulgate with their neighbours. We have no facts to go by, and scarcely any hypotheses. But I repeat: no information theory, no model of the growth into being of human consciousness, will be convincing until it accounts for the profoundly startling, "anti-economic" multiplicity of languages spoken on this crowded planet.

### From Spinoza to Kafka

**O**FTEN AN INTELLECTUAL re-orientation is identified and seen as a coherent whole only after it has manifested itself locally and in apparently unrelated forms. Looking back now to the years just before the first World War, to the simultaneous developments in linguistics, symbolic logic, and mathematical philosophy, we can recognise the beginnings of a "language revolution." A new theory of meaning and of the central role of the linguistic in man and culture were at work in a wide range of sensibility and formal pursuit.<sup>15</sup> Today, from the vantage-point of the synthesis put forward by Lévi-Strauss and Chomsky, or looking back from the shrewd histrionics of John Cage, we can see that very different energies and interests were in fact meshing towards a common impact.

<sup>15</sup> Already in 1903, in *The Principles of Mathematics*, Bertrand Russell wrote: "The study of grammar, in my opinion, is capable of throwing far more light on philosophical questions than is commonly supposed by philosophers."

<sup>16</sup> The complete text of Mauthner's 3-volume treatise appeared in 1923. The wealth and seriousness of its arguments have until now scarcely been followed up.

It is in Central Europe, particularly in Vienna and Prague between ca. 1900 and 1925 that the "language revolution" takes place at the deepest, most consequential level. Like most true revolutions, it has behind it a distinctive failure of nerve. The new linguistics arise from a drastic crisis of language; the mind loses confidence in the act of communication itself. This crisis produced a set of works, closely related in time and place of composition, which are unquestionably among the few classics of our dishevelled century. I mean Hofmannsthal's *Lord Chandos Letter* which, as early as 1902, poses the problem of the deepening gap between language and meaning, between the poet's addiction to personal truth and the eroded mendacities of his idiom; and Hofmannsthal's *Der Schwierige* in which the protagonist, who has survived live burial in the trenches, finds ordinary chatter and the lofty rhetoric of politics a hideous "indecent." The language-polemics of Karl Kraus, one of the few instances in literature of a poetry of contempt, belong to this sphere; as does Kraus' maniacal conviction that clarity and purity of syntax are the ultimate test of a society. There is Fritz Mauthner's great work, *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache*,<sup>16</sup> in which the very survival of language as a conveyor of verifiable meaning and personal responsibility is put in question. Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and the linguistic-logical exercises of the Vienna Circle are intimately related to the sensibility of Kraus or Mauthner. The latter's notion of the "unspeakable," of that which lies necessarily outside language, closely parallels Wittgenstein's rubric of "the mystical" and the closing proposition of the *Tractatus*.

The same "language crisis" was at work in the arts: in Morgenstern's *Night-song of the Fish*—a poem of absolute silence, made visible only through prosodic markings over blank, yet somehow extant, "audible" syllables—or in the fictions of Kafka. No writer has ever made of the resistance of language to truth, of the impossibility of adequate human communication, a more honest, a more eloquent statement. Kafka used every word, in a language which he experienced as alien, as if he had purloined it from a secret, dwindling store and had to bring it back before morning intact. Hermann Broch elaborated Kafka's parables on the temptations of silence. *The Death of Virgil* marks the end of the contract between imagination and reality on which the classic novel was based. In it the poet comes to recognise in the act of poetry, in a commitment to language, a blasphemy against life and the needs of man. One would also want to include in this context the new uses of silence in the music of Schönberg and Webern, and in particular the "failure of the word" which is the



dramatic substance and climax of Schönberg's *Moses und Aron*.

Obviously, there are forerunners to this extraordinary revaluation of language, to this Central European school of silence. If Hölderlin, Rimbaud, and Mallarmé emerge as the begetters of the modern, it is because modernism expressed itself as a questioning of the medium, because it made of its works a constant subversion of the very possibility of stated form. For this tactic the notorious silences of Hölderlin and Rimbaud, and the hermetic sparsities of Mallarmé provided an accredited precedent. But the Vienna-Prague movement had a grimmer quality. It was in the grip of spiritual terror. In these philosophers, poets and critics was manifest the realisation, crystallised by the catastrophe of world war, that humanism, as it had energised European consciousness since the Renaissance, was in a process of collapse. Karl Kraus' premonition of new dark ages, Kafka's eerily exact pre-vision of the holocaust, spring from an acute diagnosis of the break-down of liberal humanism. In *Auto-da-fé*, Elias Canetti produced the representative fable of speech-civilisation going to violent ruin. Precisely because language had been so central a medium of humane literacy, of the classic legacy of culture, the "language crisis" concentrated a more general devaluation. In the hollowness and death of the word, Mauthner, Wittgenstein, and Broch observed the malady of a whole civilisation. (The dominant role of Jews in this movement of terror and genius would be worth assessing. Did the Jew have an especial affinity to the life of language, the written word having been, for so long, his primary homeland?)

TWO OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS directions of thought became implicated in the "language revolution." These were the Moscow (later, Prague) circle of linguistic study, with its strong interest in the poetic and philosophic facets of language; and the practice of logical-semantic analysis we associate with G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell. Through Russell's misreading of the *Tractatus*—a misreading perhaps strategic, perhaps unavoidable in view of the obsessive guardedness of Wittgenstein's religiosity and ultimate ethical purpose—the Vienna-Prague movement and Cambridge philosophy overlapped. Wittgenstein's personal career became the symbol of that somewhat unnatural but creative meshing. In turn, *via* the work and teaching of such "Moscow linguists"

as Roman Jakobson, a more technical study of morphology, grammar, and semantics came to influence the general concept of language.<sup>17</sup> (Here again, there is a formidably interesting piece of intellectual history to be written. May one raise the question, for instance, of a possible relationship between homosexuality and certain theories of language as a "game," as a complex of internalised conventions and mirrorings?)

Whatever the variousness and complication of background, the main fact is clear: there occurred in the first quarter of this century a crisis of language and a re-examination of language in the light of that crisis. We are now beginning to be able to judge its range and consequences. I want to touch briefly on three areas of obvious impact: the philosophic, the psychological, and the literary.

### The Logicians

THE IDEA THAT ALL cognition, that the process by which man perceives and relates to the world, is, at bottom, a matter of language, is not novel. In the 11th century Peter Damian gave it pointed expression when he argued that even man's fall into paganism was owing to a flaw of grammar: because heathen speech has a plural for the word "deity," wretched humankind came to conceive of many gods. A similar notion of linguistic totality is implicit in Lenin's query: "History of thought: history of language?" Indeed, one can reasonably divide the history of philosophy between those epistemologies that stress the substantiality, the exterior verifiability and concrete objectification of human experience, and those that emphasise the creative or confining wholeness of their own means of statement, *i.e.*, which see man reaching out to reality and inward to himself only so far as language (perhaps his particular language) allows. The distinction is a very rough one precisely because even the most "realistic," the most pragmatically oriented phenomenology will, where it is being honest and severe with itself, be uneasily aware of its own verbal idiom. No metaphysic is speechless, none escapes from its own vernacular into some realm of pure material evidence.

Much of the lasting vitality of Platonism lies in its subtle realisation of this necessary solipsism. Platonism turns on the act of designation, on man's compulsive ability to recognise and map the world according to agreed nomenclature and definition. It focuses on the power of metaphor to reorganise experience by conjoining previously disparate recognitions. The quarrel of Platonism with certain modes of fiction and dramatic mime is a quarrel with a rival, potentially anarchic mapping. Scholasti-

<sup>17</sup> V. Ehrlich's *Russian Formalism, History-Doctrine* (1955), and J. Vachek's *The Linguistic School of Prague* (1966) remain the best guides to this development.



cism, in this respect more Neo-Platonic than Aristotelian, frequently identifies being with statement. The *summa* of words and of accessible reality are one. Each authenticates the other. Hence the literal importance of the image of "the book of life": that book is a lexicon in which names and realities affirm each other's true existence. For Isidore of Sevil, etymology is history because the origins of words and that of the objects they articulate are ontologically connected. When mortals speak they call into being whatever of the world is accessible to their senses and understanding. The exercise of human language enacts, albeit on a microscopically humble scale, the Divine reflex of creation, the *Logos* or "speaking into being" of the universe. Medieval sensibility and the verbal focus of Talmudic and Cabbalistic exegesis, left their impress on Spinoza. Convinced, as Descartes was,<sup>18</sup> that human controversies and confusions are, in essence, a matter of failed communication, of definitions not made or adhered to with sufficient rigour, Spinoza aimed at a grammar of truth. Where we define our terms closely, where we relate these terms in consistent propositions, we shall be able to put questions to which God—or his echoing aggregate which is the world—will give valid reply. One can relate the underlying tone of spirit in Spinoza's *Tractatus* to that of Wittgenstein by glossing the meaning of "Fall" (case); where Wittgenstein says "*Die Welt ist alles, was der Fall ist*" (the world is everything that is the case), Spinoza seems to be saying that the world is that which we can take cognisance of only if the syntax, the grammatical "case," of our discourse with it is rightly inflected. (Is there not, I wonder, an even deeper overlap at work here, an awareness that *der Fall* is also "the fall," that "the case of man" is his fallen condition—a condition whose fatal consequences were Babel and the maddening difficulties we find in seeking to communicate with each other and with reality.)

Two other elements in Spinoza's analytics proved prophetic. These are the pursuit of a mathematical model, the belief that the more it operates like a set of mathematical axioms and demonstrations, the nearer will language be to fulfilling its potential for truth; and the related

concept of a genuine *lingua communis*, of a philosophic esperanto in which all men would—as in algebra—be attaining undoubted conclusions by the use of an agreed, uniquely meaningful code.<sup>19</sup> Both ideas were fruitful. Via Leibniz's work in the calculus and Leibniz's conjectures about a universal idiom perhaps founded on Chinese ideograms, they carry over into the symbolic logic and generative grammars of the 20th century. Both are attempts to return to Edenic semantics, to that thorough concurrence between word and object which marked language before the fall, and before the malediction of mutual incomprehensibility at Babel.

POST-NIETZSCHEAN PHILOSOPHY is largely and self-proclaimedly linguistic. It has, by a deliberate tactic of retrenchment, gathered its strength in what traditional philosophies classified as the vital but only instrumental discipline of logic. Wittgenstein's famous description of philosophic activity as "speech therapy," and his statement "all philosophy is critique of language," covers much of modern ground. The *Principia Mathematica*, Wittgenstein's own *Investigations*, Austin's *Sense and Sensibilia*, the work of Professor Quine, represent a *recul pour mieux sauter*. After the word-epics of 19th-century philosophy, after the literal vastness of argument in Hegel, Schopenhauer, and *Zarathustra*, a good deal of the best in contemporary philosophy embodies a reflex of asceticism, a fastidious severity often mathematical in mien. Thus symbolic logic and the numbering of propositions in the *Tractatus* instance a comparable search for the clarity and demonstrable coherence of algebraic argument. Here again, Spinoza's *Ethics* may be seen as a distant precedent.

STATEMENTS ABOUT OURSELVES and about what is "other" or "outside" the self are, first of all, *statements*. How they are made up, the rules that govern their usage and translation, their incompletions—these are felt to constitute the proper métier of philosophy. But that métier is itself a matter of statement. Hence the inherently self-conscious, unstable relations of the philosopher and of the philosophical process to the object of his or its activity. Philosophy is meta-language, a kind of discourse about the possibilities and nature of common or, as the case may be, special discourse. Like the diamond-cutter, the philosopher-linguist is a craftsman whose tools are made of the same substance as that which he works on. It is his heuristic job to make this solution explicit, to make us aware of our skin and thus, at least by

<sup>18</sup> "*Si de verborum significatione inter philosophos semper conveniret fere omnes illorum controversiae tolerentur.*" (Regulae XII, 5.)

<sup>19</sup> "Almost all controversy would cease if there was agreement between philosophers as to the meaning of terms."

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, George Dalgarno's *Ars Signorum* (1661), and Bishop Wilkins' *Essay towards a real character and a philosophical language* (1668) for a proposal of a universal sign language.

virtue of momentary mental exercise, able to step outside it while insisting, simultaneously, that we cannot really do so. The best of modern philosophy has something of the penetrating but disembodied incandescence of a beam of light trapped, "imploded," between mirrors.

This, of course, is not the whole story. The common charge brought against linguistic philosophy is, precisely, its reductiveness, its refusal to acknowledge as philosophically relevant such areas as politics, aesthetics, morals, or metaphysics in the old sense. The laser may cut deep but its focus is absurdly narrow and its insights are, in the last analysis, no better than formal. By demanding criteria of coherence and proof imitative of mathematics and, therefore, quite inapplicable to most patterns of human conduct and aspiration, modern philosophy has abdicated from a consideration of life and has itself become an esoteric game. Chess does not assist mankind in its racked search for transcendent values.

This is obviously a serious accusation. It underlies the estrangement of "pure" from general or "innocently verbalised" philosophy. There is a sense in which both Quine and Sartre are philosophers; but that sense is too diffuse to be of much worth or to induce normal collaboration. To a philosopher-linguist, most of what a Sartre or an Ernst Bloch produces is simply non-sense. The intellectual and social cost of this divorcement is probably high. Nevertheless, the "language revolution" in philosophy has been fiercely educative and will not be undone. The somewhat fatuous naïveté about the nature and limitations of the verbal idiom that led to the style of a Bergson or a Heidegger need not recur. We shall not see again leviathans of print that declare themselves systematic and demonstrative of truth by mere rhetorical fiat (how thick the dust lies on the tomes of Karl Jaspers). Moreover, even where it excludes traditional moral disputation, even where it questions the truth-function of ethical propositions, a language-therapy such as Wittgenstein's is a distinctly moral act: by demanding acute self-awareness, by forcing us to put the cards of belief on the table, by making of every perception a scruple and a risk. Paul Valéry's fable of epistemology, *M. Teste*, beautifully renders the relevant asceticism, the thorny elegance which equates a *non sequitur*, a *petitio principii*, or a failure to define one's terms with bad manners.

And though it avoids the grand operatics of theology, linguistic philosophy has made of this exclusion an act of deeply suggestive inference. What lies outside language ought not to be spoken of, cannot be spoken of without

gross falsification, but it is by no means negated. As Wittgenstein wrote in 1917: "Nothing is lost if one does not seek to say the unsayable. Instead, that which cannot be spoken is—unspeakably—contained in that which is said!"<sup>20</sup> This assertion makes the *Tractatus* heir to the anti-rhetoric of Kierkegaard and to Tolstoy's hatred of "style."

By underlining and probing the linguistic anatomy of human consciousness, the language-philosophers have made our sense of identity and reach more modest, more vulnerable, but also subtler. Like Monsieur Jourdain we all know now that we speak prose, and this vulgate condition determines much of our sense of the world. But where such awareness penetrates more traditional and substantive forms of philosophic argument as, for example, in the writings of Merleau-Ponty, an unmistakable finesse and strength result. A reoccupation of relinquished terrain may lie ahead, a fresh advance from meta-language into language. If it takes place, it will do so in a stoic, highly trained cognisance of the conventionality, of the solipsism of all philosophic statement (of any significant statement *tout court*). The equilibrist will move ahead with his eyes open.

## The Hopi World

ANY MODEL OF THE RULES of the mind leads back to an explicit or undeclared psychology. Underneath every logic and epistemology, however prescriptive and neutral they may be, we find a theory of consciousness. It is at the intersections between philosophy and psychology that the new linguistics (or those branches called "psycho-linguistics" and "ethno-linguistics") is proving of great importance. Fundamental to the current approach is a postulate associated with the work of Benjamin Lee Whorf on "language, thought and reality" and, in particular, on the Hopi language-family of the American south-west. It is a postulate at once self-evident and formidably suggestive:

The forms of a person's thoughts are controlled by inexorable laws of pattern of which he is unconscious. These patterns are the unperceived intricate systematisations of his own language—shown readily enough by a candid comparison and contrast with other languages, especially those of a different linguistic family. His thinking itself is in a language—in English, in Sanskrit, in Chinese. And every language is a vast pattern-system, different from others, in which are culturally ordained the forms and categories by which the personality not only communicates, but also analyses nature, notices or neglects types of relationship and phenomena, channels his reasoning, and builds the house of his consciousness.

<sup>20</sup> Letter to Paul Engelmann, 9 April 1917.

The argument is that every human being's world picture and the specific sum of such pictures in his society are a linguistic function.<sup>21</sup> If different cultures have different ways of mapping space and time, of qualifying motion and states of being, if a Hopi Indian can (as Whorf controversially insisted) obtain a better intuitive grasp of certain thought-pictures in Einsteinian physics than can most English-speakers, the reason is that his language has prepared the requisite and appropriate grooves of sensation.

Different tongues generate and programme different life-forms. A given language selects particular *données*. Where Bergson and Chomsky assume *données immédiates de la conscience*, Whorf is pointing to the gradually evolving, mediate elements of culture, history, social adaptation. Each language derives certain conventions of recognition, certain rules of relationship or antithesis from a manifold, initially random or chaotic potential. Conversely, where definitions break down, where syntax dissolves, the old chaos returns, either in the pathology of an individual or in the collapse of a society.<sup>22</sup>

Our language is our window on life. It determines for its speaker the dimensions, perspective and horizon of a part of the total landscape of the world. Of *a part*. No speech, however ample its vocabulary, however refined and adventurous its grammar, can organise the entire potential of experience. None, be it ever so sparse and rudimentary, fails to give *some* usable grid. The more we learn about languages, the more are we made aware of the particularity, of the vital idiosyncrasies, of any one language-vision. Thus so much of that characteristic Western sense of time as vectored flow, of sequential causality, of the irreducible status of the individual, is inseparable from the bone-structure, from the lucid but probably over-abstract patterns of Indo-European syntax. We can locate in these patterns the substrata of past-present-future, of subject-verb-object, of pronominal disjunction between ego and collectivity, that shape so many elements

in Western metaphysics, religion, and politics. Through their wealth of singular designation—their delicately graded discriminations of colour, scent, and local form—through the subtle grammatical co-ordinates by which they locate different states of action at different points in space, numerous so-called “primitive” languages exploit possibilities of feeling and response which we have left fallow.<sup>23</sup>

To learn a language beside one's native idiom, to penetrate its syntax, is to open for oneself a second window on the landscape of being. It is to escape, even if only partially, from the confinement of the apparently obvious, from the intolerant poverty, so corrosive just because one is unconscious of it, of a single focus and monochrome lens.

The consequences for psychology are drastic. It is doubtful whether any normative, generalised psychology of the kind found, for example, in Lockean rationalism, cuts very deep. A psychology is topographic. It is a piece of local inventory and description, more or less complete, more or less accomplished in its techniques of excavation and projection. It maps mental operations, habits of feeling, conventions of self-awareness and “otherness” as they prevail throughout a culture or, at the largest, family of cultures. Where consciousness communicates with itself and outward in a thoroughly different linguistic context, a different psychology may be in order. There are few universals, fewer I imagine, than classic humanism and Cartesian-Chomskian models of the common man assume. Even the most “obvious,” deeply incised concepts and rules of manipulation in the human psyche seem to acquire, immediately above the neurological level, local specifications and historical-cultural singularities. It may well be that there is only one universal—the incest taboo required, if it really is, for the preservation and development of the human species. Concepts of identity, of time, of the continuity or discontinuity of life and death, are not a part of Descartes' *sens commun* or a Kantian *a priori*, but highly differentiated, culturally varied, linguistically generated and transmitted conventions. Such a thing as a “universal psychology” would have to be a branch of molecular biology. All other psychology is history of language and social usage.

### The Freudian Script

PSYCHO-ANALYSIS provides a crucial example. Unquestionably, Freud hoped for material substantiation, for neuro-physiological corroboration for his theories of mental structure. In the last analysis—and one may take the phrase

<sup>21</sup> This idea was, in fact, put forward for the first time by the neglected French grammarian and playwright Antoine Fabre d'Olivet in his *Langue hébraïque restituée* (1815–16).

<sup>22</sup> The thesis of “linguistic relativity,” as advanced by Sapir and Whorf, is by no means unanimously accepted. A strong critique is presented in Max Black's *The Labyrinth of Language* (1968). For a balanced view, see F. Rossi-Landi, “*Ideologie della relatività linguistica*.”

<sup>23</sup> Clyde Kluckhohn and Dorothea Leighton tell us that in the Navaho language some thousand names of plants have been recorded in current speech (*The Navaho*, 1946).

as a legitimate pun—such postulates of psycho-analysis as the tripartite division of id, ego, and superego, or the mechanics of psychic storage, repression, and discharge, ought to be reflected in the architecture of the brain and in the neurochemistry of nervous impulse. Only such empirical data could support the inference of psycho-analytic universality (a point clearly seen by Malinowski when he attacked psycho-analysis from an anthropological direction in his *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*). Without physiological corroboration, the Freudian account of personality, penetrating and suggestive as it is, might remain a brilliant piece of local, historically circumscribed observation. In its awkward *bonhomie*, a remark Freud makes in *The Ego and the Id* (and it is one of numerous similar asides) shows the intensity of his search for anatomical backing: "We might add, perhaps, that the ego wears an auditory lobe—on one side only, as we learn from cerebral anatomy...."

Gradually Freud opted for a para-scientific methodology; he moved further and further from the empirical-evidential criteria of clinical psycho-pathology. He had to. But in doing so, Freud entered (consciously, I think) on a Pascalian wager. The more acute his therapeutic insights, the more pressing the need for normative, experimentally verifiable neurological evidence. Without this evidence, the psycho-analytic method would become, ever more, an act of "personal magic," a repetition by lesser men, in a queer limbo of shamanism, of Freud's virtuosic "tricks" of insight.

It is, I believe, fair to say that the neurophysiological evidence has not turned up, or not in the unequivocal way expected by the early, and tenaciously hoped for by the late Freud. Today, psycho-analysis looks more and more like an inspired construct of the historical and poetic imagination, like one of those dynamic fictions through which the master-builders of the 19th century—Hegel, Balzac, Auguste Comte—summarised and gave communicative force to their highly personal, dramatic readings of man and society. It is, perhaps, less as a contemporary of Poincaré or Rutherford that one now sees Freud than as the great inheritor of the 19th-century systematic philosophers, playwrights, and novelists. Like that of Schopenhauer, to which it has such radical affinities, the work of Freud impresses one as a superbly perceptive, eloquent summation, already tinged with a stoic premonition of incipient ruin, of European bourgeois humanism, *floruit* 1789–1914. Freud's mapping—dare one say, mythology—of human motives and behaviour is profoundly circumstantial. It mirrors, it codifies rationally, the economic and social

assumptions, the erotic mores, the domestic rites, of the Central European urban middle class in the years from 1880 to the collapse of agreed values in the first World War. At every point, Freud's chronicle of consciousness interacts with the surrounding sociological, economic, cultural setting. His model of libido and repression, of masculine authority, of generational antagonism, of licit and clandestine sexuality, is inseparable from the facts of family and professional existence in the Vienna of his day. There is more than a touch of buried architectural metaphor in the whole ego/id/super-ego theory—the cellarage, living quarters, and attic of the bourgeois house. Indeed, Freud's raw material and therapeutic instrument are no less verbal, no less rooted in language, than is the art of Balzac or Proust.

THIS IS SUCH AN OBVIOUS point that it was long overlooked. Psycho-analysis is a *matter of words*—words heard, glossed, stumbled over, exchanged. There can be no analysis if the patient is mute or the doctor is deaf. There can be none, or only its indifferent rudiments, if the patient has not attained a critical level of articulateness, if his own uses of language are too thin or commonplace. If psycho-analysis has, from the outset, drawn almost exclusively on a clientèle of a very restricted social milieu, the reasons are not (or not primarily) financial and modish. Only the educated, leisured classes of society exhibit the degree of verbalisation, of multiple semantic reference, of decorous elision, indispensable to the analytic process. But the question goes far beyond individual literacy. The language itself must have reached a sufficient density, a sufficient wealth of implication and effect. For psycho-analysis to function, the vernacular in which the patient freely associates must have a certain range, historical resonance, idiomatic variety, argotic underground and body of allusion. Only then can the analyst hear inside the verbal matrix, those ambiguities, concealments, word-plays, betraying muddles, on which he founds his therapeutic interpretation. (The analyst is a "translator into daylight.") In short, the particular linguistic system must be resourceful and syntactically highly evolved before the psycho-analyst's decoding can be of use.

Hence the "locality" and profoundly literary character of Freud's unravellings. These are firmly bound to the expressive and suppressive idiom of the Central European, largely Jewish middle class of the late 19th century in which Freud himself came of age. Freud's descriptions of the actions of consciousness and of the unconscious cannot be dissociated from the grammatical structures and referential conventions

(referential especially in regard to slang and to literature) of German and Austrian German in the age of von Hofmannsthal, Arthur Schnitzler, and Thomas Mann.

IT MAY BE THAT the psycho-analytic theory of the unconscious and of the dynamics of neurosis has general applications. But today, it would seem that its main authority lies in the field of language-history and of the sociology of speech. No therapist since Freud has met with any true "Freudian cases," *i.e.*, with patients whose syntax of self-consciousness and association is much like that of the men and women—more women than men—whom Freud listened to and woke echo from in the Vienna of the 1890s. Moreover, the wide dissemination of psycho-analytic lore and literature has had its negative feed-back: much of classical Freudian praxis no longer works precisely because the patient can no longer display the needed linguistic innocence and associative spontaneity. Too many of us now know the script in advance.

A RECOGNITION OF THIS FACT, and of the methodological dilemmas that arise from it, inspires the revaluation of psycho-analysis currently taking place in France. The pronouncements of Dr. Jacques Lacan and of the *Cahiers pour l'analyse* are, not infrequently, indecipherably turgid and portentous. Nevertheless, their primary argument is clear and of compelling importance. *Fonction et champ de la parole et du langage* and the *Propos sur la causalité psychique* are almost certainly the major statements made by psycho-analysis after Freud.<sup>24</sup> Lacan aims to re-establish the Freudian theory of psychic process and the consequent methods of therapy on a basis of linguistics. The "means of psycho-analysis are those of speech... its domain is that of concrete discourse." The unconscious may be understood as "a blank or a false statement" in the stream of messages through which the ego articulates its identity. Suppressed or evaded memories survive as "well spoken lies." Indeed, memory itself is essentially a selective use of a past tense. The symptoms of neurosis can be located (*heard*) and analysed only because they already occur "in a language form." Lacan is an ultra-nominalist: "it is the world of words that creates the world of things." Psycho-analysis is a privileged mode of insight into this creative

function because it knows the semantic structure of reality, because it knows that man is surrounded "by a total network of symbolic relations," most of which are manifest in language.

The substantive limitations of man are madness and death, conditions in which language refuses to signify. Psycho-analysis can deal with neither. (Freud's speculations on the "death-instinct" are an attempt at re-integrative myth. The "speechless" falls outside psycho-analysis precisely as it does outside Wittgenstein's elementary propositions.) This is the true reason why Freudian therapy is restricted to neurosis. Neurosis operates at the level of articulate, semantically conventional or only moderately disordered communication. Psychosis transcends grammar.

It is too soon to tell whether this attempted synthesis of Freud and of structural linguistics will work, whether it will provide psycho-analysis with the empirical backing denied to it by neuro-physiology. It may well be that, like Freud himself, Lacan is manoeuvring from too narrow, too naively verbal a basis. The study and therapeutic uses of the media of significant communication available to the human person will have to reckon with numerous extra-linguistic codes. Known as "paralanguages," such signal-systems as gesture, mien, dance, dress, non-verbalised sound of every kind, have been much investigated since Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* of 1872. As I stressed before, such systems do not constitute "language" and their use by modern man is, at every point, linguistically penetrated or "debased." As the work of Paget, of Kroeber, of R. L. Birdwhistell on sign languages and "kinesics" makes clear, these "paralanguages" form a kind of animate zone around the complete linguistic act.<sup>25</sup> But it would be surprising if an exclusively verbal approach could prove adequate to the communicative energies of the psyche, particularly of the psyche in some partial state of lesion.

YET WHATEVER THE VALIDITY of Lacan's "psycho-semantics," one fact is obvious. The whole future of psychology is bound up with that of linguistic study, with our deepening grasp of man's unique speech-status. Psychology can no longer be separate from our realisation of how radically a particular language, a specific linguistic world-image, conditions the life of the mind.

Already it is apparent that any fruitful study of the genesis of personality in the child is, at decisive points, a study of the development of speech and of the links between speech and conceptualisation. Monkeys are less like child-

<sup>24</sup> The greater part of Lacan's writings has been collected in *Écrits* (1966).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. A. J. Greimas, ed., *Pratiques et langages gestuels* (Langages, 10, 1968).

ren than behavioural psychologists or incensed parents would suppose. We are also beginning to suspect that certain patterns of *anomie*, of anti-social and anarchic conduct, are related to verbal inadequacy, to the inability of the grammatically underprivileged to "branch into" a society whose codes of communication and idiom of values are too sophisticated. Henceforth, it is unlikely that clinical and social psychology, cultural anthropology and the study of language can get very far without constant collaboration and cross-reference. A book such as L. S. Vygotsky's *Thought and Language* (1962) written in the context of experimental psychology, points the way.

### Literature & Linguistics

LITERARY CRITICISM and literary history are minor arts. We suffer at present from a spurious inflation of criticism into some kind of autonomous role. The interest wasted on the personality and quarrels of critics, the mass of criticism produced about works of literature which few of the educated public ever bother to read for themselves (T. S. Eliot on Dante is a representative case)—these are phenomena of journalism and may be indices of a general enervation. Critics and historians of literature write about writing; they offer books about books. It is nonsense to overlook this ontological derivativeness, let alone exalt the act of commentary above that of invention. Today there is even an academic *métier* in the criticism of criticism. Not very many statues are being raised to writers, but contrary to Sainte-Beuve's gloomy prognostication, there may be before long to critics.

A plain view of the dependent, secondary nature of literary and historical comment is more than a necessary honesty. It may, in fact, open the way to a legitimate future for criticism and rescue it from some of its current triviality and megalomania.

Being words about already extant words, a discourse on modes of discourses already established, the propositions of the critic form a meta-language. That a number of literary critics have mimed in their work the expressive techniques of the text they deal with, that important literary criticism will, at times, pass into the category of "active form," does not alter the fact: criticism, analysis, *explication de texte*,

commemoration (a remembering with the reader), are linguistic constructs scaffolded about a previous linguistic construct. However eloquent or poetically suggestive in statement, the critic's job of work is more truly akin to that of the logician, grammarian, and linguist than it is to that of the novelist, playwright, or poet. But precisely in that may lie the way ahead.

Every work of literature, from the barest incantations known to ethnography to the "randomised" fiction of Mr. William Burroughs, is a specialised language-act (what the latest school of criticism in France calls *écriture*).<sup>28</sup> It is a piece of language in a heightened condition of order, elision, reference, ornament, or phonetic expressiveness. "Literature," exactly like any act of communication, is a selection from the available totality or potential of semantic resources in a given language (or, in rare cases, more than one language). The difference being—and it can only be put roughly—that literature selects according to aims and criteria other than immediate utility and unreflective colloquialism. Literature exists only because there can be realised—again, very roughly—a membrane to divide it from the common flow of discourse. Certain lexical and syntactical material is "filtered out" according to principles other than those of basic communication. The membrane may be exceedingly thin and permeable: extreme *verismo* aims at an idiom almost completely open to the inrush of the ordinary "unselected" vulgate. But there must be a separation, a voluntary sifting according to observable criteria, for the novel, poem or play to achieve actual being.

Once such a separation occurs—it need be no more than a modern dramatist splicing the tape he has hidden in a railway waiting-room—there results a linguistic structure, an *écriture*, of immense complexity. The number of formal variables, the range and intricacy of possible conventions, the individual, local, temporal modifiers in a literary text, are fantastic in number and specificity. By comparison, even the most taxing problems in formal logic are one-dimensional. Once it is in a condition of literature, language behaves exponentially. It is at every point more than itself. No mere inventory can exhaust the possible interactions between semantic units in even a "simple" lyric. All language, as we have seen, stands in an active, ultimately creative relationship to reality. In literature that relationship is energised and complicated to the highest possible degree. A major poem discovers hitherto un-lived life-forms and, quite literally, releases hitherto inert forces of perception. Even as Cézanne discovered the implicit, but before him "unseen"

<sup>28</sup> Jacques Derrida, *De La Grammatologie* (1967), and Philippe Sollers, *Logiques* (1968), give a picture of this precious and hermetic but also stimulating approach.

weight and blue-shadow rotundity of apples or the patient gravamen of a chair-leg.

THE COMPLEXITY AND DELICACY of the material of literature are such that neither formal logic nor linguistics have contributed more than the obvious to our understanding of a literary work. Efforts have been made to analyse the structure of poems or of paragraphs of narrative prose with the aid of symbolic logic, to dismantle the machine and locate its sources of impact.<sup>27</sup> Almost invariably, the outcome is an elegant diagram and a fatuous conclusion. Phonological, grammatical anatomies of literary passages are scarcely better. Their apparatus, particularly statistical, is often awesome, but the insights obtained are usually jejune and in reach of the most obvious critical reading. Neither the linguist nor the phonetician has the historical awareness, the familiarity with formal and biographical context, the training of tactile sensibility, that mark the competent critic. They lack what Coleridge called the required "speculative instruments." Because these techniques are committed to exhaustiveness, all elements must be accounted for, and to a specific degree of rigour. They must, as it were, be accounted for to several decimal places. In fact, however, formal logic and technical linguistics fall short of the provisional exactitudes of good criticism. The latter is precise, but in a very different way. Its precision may lie, for instance, in what it leaves unmapped, in the circle of diffidence it draws around the particular autonomy and "unaccountability" of the creative act. Coleridge's analysis of the nature and effects of metre in chapter XVIII and XXII of the *Biographia Literaria*, is indirectly immediate, it proceeds tangentially to the centre. It does so by mimesis, by a parallel acting out and bodying forth of meaning. The range of kinetic and nervous reference on which it draws is finely commensurate with the shape and difficulty of the question, with the fact (so often slighted by the logician) that the most polysemic of human constructs—a poem—is the object of examination.

But let us be clear. Formal logic and modern linguistics cannot do the job of the critic. But the critic, in turn, can ill afford to ignore what they, and linguistics especially, have to offer. I would go further. The current state of criticism is so facile and philosophically naïve, so

much of literary criticism, particularly in England and America, is puffed-up book-reviewing or thinly disguised preaching, that a responsible collaboration with linguistics may prove the best hope.

Such collaboration would by no means be novel. Quintilian and the Renaissance made little operative distinction between the study of grammar and that of grammar animated by poetics or rhetoric. Negotiated via philology, an alliance between linguistics and literary criticism is explicit in the work of Eric Auerbach, Ernst Robert Curtius, and Leo Spitzer. Roman Jakobson has expounded it since 1919 and the discussions on *epitheta ornantia* by the Moscow Linguistic Circle. It underlies a good deal of the critical practice of I. A. Richards and William Empson. It was the goal of Walter Benjamin whose "hermeneutic" readings of baroque tragedy, Goethe, and French symbolist verse relate the 20th-century language-revolution to much older habits of Talmudic exegesis. We need not accept Jakobson's prescription<sup>28</sup> that linguistics be allowed to "direct the investigation of verbal art in all its compass and extent" (*direct* being the over-stated term). But we must acknowledge the full force of his observation that

the poetic resources contained in the morphological and syntactic structure of language, briefly the poetry of grammar, and its literary product, the grammar of poetry, have been seldom known to critics.

WHAT ARE SOME of the new directions for a linguistically educated literary criticism?

Obviously a great deal wants doing in the study of the structure of poetry, in a probing, at once technical and philosophic, of the vital "strangeness," of the strictly confined yet privileged conventions of syntax, of tonal relation, which set a poem apart from all other types of signal. We need more and subtler identifications than are as yet available of the phonetics of poetry, of the musicality which declares, infers or dissolves meaning in a poem. In that way, to what extent is poetic "truth" made to sound true; in what manner is music the verification of poetic statement?<sup>29</sup> We require a congruence of historical, morphological, and literary awareness to tell us far more than we as yet know about the interactions of syntax and genre at different periods in literature. Thus the root-energies of the heroic couplet seem to be an intensification of contemporary speech-forms, a kind of super-grammar; whereas we find in certain schools of modern verse an anti-grammar, an alternative, more contingent order of discourse than is active in normal diction.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> A number of such exercises may be found in *Style in Language*, ed. T. A. Sebeok (1960).

<sup>28</sup> See his key paper on "Linguistics and Poetics" (in *Style and Language*).

<sup>29</sup> Many acute observations are contained in Christine Brooke-Rose, *A Grammar of Metaphor* (1958).

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Donald Davie, *Articulate Energy* (1955).



What are the relations between metrical systems, between the elements of stress, recurrence, rhyme, in a given prosody and the structure of the language as a whole? Russian polysyllabic words admit only one stress and therefore enter into binary metres only if a metric stress is dropped. Does such a linguistic fact relate to the nature of the poetry produced and, in turn, to the patterns of sensibility a poetry generates in the relevant society and culture? May we think of metre as a "substitute-logic," a code of organised semantic sequences which can, but need not, mesh with the casual, temporal, spatial "rules" of ordinary discourse? What can lexical linguistics tell us of the density, of the regional or centralised focus, of the conservatism or receptivity to innovation and foreign import, of a language at different stages in its history? Surely it is no longer necessary to regard as authoritative, let alone verifiable, Eliot's famous dictum that "something happened to the mind of England" between the time of Donne and that of Browning. If such a statement is to have meaning, it must be accountable to the history of the language. The true "evidence" for Eliot's theory is his own achievement as a poet; it is a programme for his own verse that is being argued here in a characteristically masked form. Indeed, Eliot's literary criticism may be the last to be so influential yet so casual in its linguistic and philosophic interest.

Beyond these lines of enquiry into the shared life of grammar, phonetics, logic, linguistic history and poetry, there lie areas of extreme difficulty.

Do literary genres—the verse epic, the ode, verse tragedy, the prose novel—have some kind of interior life-cycle, do they correspond to needs or occasions in the language itself and lose their conviction when those occasions pass or those needs are fulfilled? What is the act of translation? What linguistic, philosophic, and poetic functions are involved when a line of poetry moves across the border from one language to another, and how is the very possibility of translation underwritten by recent models of transformational grammar?<sup>31</sup> If certain civilisations produce "greater," more consistently vital literature than others, is part of the reason linguistic? In other words, are some languages, in a way we cannot even formulate precisely, more suited to literary expression than others? Do their syntax and vocabulary contain a greater potential of expressive muta-

tion, of "language set apart"? And in what way does literature generate further literature? To which question the converse would be: does the existence of a Dante, of a Shakespeare, of a Goethe in a given language inhibit the recurrence of comparable achievement? Are there entropies in language and expressive resources as there are in matter?

In 1941, John Crowe Ransom advertised: *Wanted: An Ontological Critic*, a reader equipped to disclose in poetry "the secret of its strange yet stubborn existence as a kind of discourse unlike any other." A complete ontology of poetic form and of poetic effect is very probably beyond our means. More than any other speech-act, the poem goes to the roots of language itself, to the unique communicatory and responsive dialectic of human identity. But advances can be made and their interest will, in Ransom's phrase, be "profounder and more elemental" than that of the majority of what now serves as literary criticism and literary history. Neither has yet registered the decisive truism that literature—all literature—is a form and function of language. It is the poets who have always known that.

### In the Absence of Fantasia

AS WE NOTED, the "language-revolution" arose from an urgent sense of linguistic crisis. Today, we can see how accurate Mauthner and Karl Kraus were in their alarmed foresight. Even as we are beginning to know more about language, to ask better questions about the reciprocities of speech and human identity, language itself is under pressure.

I have sought elsewhere to locate some of the main sources. Totalitarian politics, be they Fascist, Stalinist, or tribal, have set out to master language. They must do so precisely because a totalitarian model of society lays claim to the core and entirety of the human person. Modern tyrannies have re-defined words, often in a deliberate, grotesque reversal of normal meaning: life signifies death, total enslavement stands for freedom, war is peace. Stalinism and current tribal hysterias labour, often with success, to uproot the past tense from the safeguard of common remembrance. Stalinist and Maoist historiography re-invent the past. Historical occurrences, the names and very existence of human beings, unacceptable ideas, are obliterated by decree. An artifice of unanimous memory—a drilled recollection of fictions and non-events—replaces the natural plurality of individual recall. In the grammar of totalitarian speech, which Kenneth Burke<sup>32</sup> looked at even before George Orwell, conjugations of the verb

<sup>31</sup> The author is at present preparing a study of this topic.

<sup>32</sup> See his essay, "The Rhetoric of Hitler's 'Battle'" in *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (1941).



take place in a depersonalised present and in a utopian future (a *plus que parfait*, if I may reverse the ordinary meaning of that tense). Being a falsehood constantly altered and renewed, the past is made present. To unspeak the actual past, to eradicate the names, acts, thoughts of the unwanted dead, is a tyranny of peculiar horror. Pursued rigorously, it cuts off humanity, or certain societies, from the vital responsibilities of mourning and of justice. Man is set back in a landscape without echo.

Moreover, the planned falsification and dehumanisation of language carried out by totalitarian régimes have had effects and counterparts beyond their borders. These are reflected, though in a less murderous way, in the idiom of advertisement, wish-fulfilment and consensus-propaganda of consumer technocracies. We live under a constant wash of mendacity. Millions of words tide over us with no intent of clear meaning. Quiet is becoming the prerogative of a sheltered élite or the cage of the desolate. As a result, expressive modes have been grossly inflated. Their discriminatory precision, their graphic, verifiable content have been eroded to a public smoothness. The percentage of cliché, of language-tags shared by all and lived by none, has risen steadily. A study of random samples of urban telephone calls suggests a drastic diminution and standardisation of vocabulary and syntax accompanied by a formidable growth of actual speech-output. In the world of the telephone we speak more to say less. It may be, correspondingly, that in that of radio, television, tape-recorder and film, we hear more and listen less. Lexicographers estimate that the English vulgate contains in excess of six hundred thousand words. Less than one hundred words account for seventy-five per cent of all messages transmitted by telephone and telegraph. An analogous reduction of grammar, of the available delicacies and interrelations in sentence-structure, underlies the rhetoric of advertisement and mass-journalism. We write fewer personal letters and our letters are shorter than in middle-class usage in the 18th and 19th centuries. Our schooling puts an ever-diminishing stress on verbal remembrance. How many educated individuals today can recite by heart more than a few tatters of poetry or prose? We read more in actual volume of print, but less that is exacting and linguistically enriching.<sup>33</sup>

If the politics of terror press on the individual, on his right to remember and to make personal

statement, so do the politics of licence. That the near-abolition of verbal taboos, particularly with regard to the erotic, has narrowed and weakened the imaginative authority of literature, seems probable. What is more difficult to show, but more corrosive, is the effect of the removal of verbal inhibitions on the life-force, on the centre and mystery of language. Saying all, and saying it in the same market-place words as everyone else, means imagining, personally recreating less. We face a new situation here, and one that is obviously difficult to analyse. But taboos or speech-zones reserved for occasions of special intimacy and seriousness, had a vitalising as well as a protective function.<sup>34</sup> Words which used to lodge at the heart of conventional silence, that were only expended in an act of complete trust and exchange of self—as sexual terms might be spoken loud in the last privacy of love—are near the deep springs of language. They kept it, in some degree, magical. Verbal reticence is the only thing that relates our publicised, exhibitionist sensibility to antique energies and sources of wonder. There was a time when the word was *Logos*, when a man would not readily deliver his true name into another man's keeping, when the name or numinous titles of the deity were left unspoken. By hoarding all reserve out of our ways of speech, by making loud and public the dim places of feeling, we may be hacking up by their roots (roots, one suspects, closely related) indispensable forces both of poetry and eros. Parading so openly, being so wastefully shared, our lives, and the language in which we experience them, go the more naked.

A MORE GENERAL CHANGE may be implicated in these devaluations. Ten years ago, I called it "the retreat from the word." Conceivably, verbal communication will play a smaller, a less creative role than before, in the life of consciousness. Today, non-verbal codes such as those of mathematics already map and control much of reality; soon, with a change in the sociology and criteria of literacy, they may come to communicate that reality to more and more human beings. The binomial primer, the grammar of calculus and set-theory may come to be as current as the more traditional "first reader." No word-signal can go beyond childish simile when trying to tell us that a table or a chair is a system of electrons in statistically-describable motion, separated by distances and intricacies of force comparable, on their scale, to those in the galaxy. Mathematics can say this precisely and can make its statement exhilaratingly suggestive to those who know its syntax.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Robert Escarpit, *La Révolution du livre* (1965).

<sup>34</sup> For a rather superficial but well-informed statement, see W. Simon and J. Gagnon, "Sex Talk—Public and Private" (*Etc.*, xxv, 1968).

At many points in our immediate culture, language-forms seem stale or unwelcome, like actors from a condemned playhouse. Abstract art scorns verbal paraphrase. It demands that we learn to read its own self-contained idiom. A painting of a man in a golden helmet or of a blue bowl with red apples may, through its concentration of visual and tactile means, be "untranslatable" into any other medium; but in so far as it *represents*, as it admits of a title, the Rembrandt or Chardin canvas is an intensely "stated," syntactically organised proposition. *Black on Black* or *Composition Ninety-one* are not. A comparable advance into the absolute characterises the abandonment of classical musical forms. A classical sonata or a romantic symphony, with their exposition, thematic development, recapitulation and conclusion, had a marked structural analogy to the grammar of speech. The music of Stockhausen and Cage, especially where it invites a free choice of sequence, a randomisation of performed units, breaks with the architecture of language. (It is precisely a dependence on ordered sequence, an impossibility of wilful reversal or random placing which, as generative grammar reminds us, constitute language.) Today words seem to comprehend less of reality, and to tell us less of what we need to know.

So much is fairly evident. What lies further can only be conjecture.

I WONDER WHETHER the primacy of language as we have known it in human civilisation, as well as many of the dominant syntactical features of language, are not the embodiment of a particular view of man's identity and death. The trinary set, past-present-future, the subject-object function, the metaphysics and psychology of the first person pronoun, the conventions of linguistic repeatability and variation on which we found our techniques of remembrance and, hence, our culture—all these codify an image of the human person which is now under attack. A "happening," an aleatory piece of music, an artefact made only to be destroyed, are strategic denials of the future tense, even as the derision of precedent, the unsaying of history or a contemptuous indifference towards it, are a refusal of a past. In the grammar of the freak-out and

the wrecker it is always today. The idea, so crucial to our civilisation, that things said and created now may, by virtue of their impertinence to the present, have a strength of being greater, scandalously more durable than our own, is seen as illusion or bourgeois hypocrisy. To the new vigilantes and utopians of the immediate, there is something outrageous in the possibility that most personal lives are insignificant and meant for oblivion, and that the present becomes future only through the music, mathematics, poetry, and thought of a very small number. Until now, an arrogant, perhaps irrational *dur désir de durer* has been the life-impulse of history. It may no longer be an acceptable ideal. The young militias are right when they bellow; the agitators are showing deep insight when they abrogate all discussion by saying "fuck off." They no longer share the language of their enemies. They want nothing to do with it. They would break free of language as from their own shadows. They must stop their ears to all the ceremonious, ironic voices from the past that are in books, that will outlive them, and that speak of death.<sup>35</sup>

There is also another direction from which the individual "I," the concept of the human person as an irreducible mystery, is under pressure. Totalitarian politics, the long erosion of fear, tend to collectivise men and women, to reduce as far as possible their sanctuary of private identity. So do the conditions of standardised desire, of noise level, of programmed efficacy in a "free society." (The linguistic divergencies between West German and East German speech provide an instructive case of similar deformation under different stress).<sup>36</sup> It is, today, increasingly difficult to "be oneself," to carve out for one's idiom, physical style and habits of sensibility an untypical terrain. Under the piston-stroke of the mass media, of open and subliminal advertisement, even our dreams have grown more uniform. Like our bread, much of our manner of being comes pre-packaged. It is only in secret that we celebrate the insolent wonder of the ego, that we inhale—oh riddle of sensuality—the smell of our own ordure.

With the development of surgical transplants, the very definition of personal existence, of a mortal, *untranslatable* self, grows perplexing. "Which part of my body was I, which will be you?" Rimbaud's *je est un autre*, that prophetic password to the trance and violence of the new freedom, is taking on a medical meaning. But it is a meaning exterior to all known coordinates of syntax. With heart transplantation a fact, and surgical transfers of the brain definitely conceivable, the *I/you* disjunction through which the language-animal entered on history is no longer self-evident.

<sup>35</sup> It is their understanding of the revolutionary nature of a scream and a nonsense-word which make Jarry and Artaud the true prophets of today's insurrections.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. the discussion of this important topic in Hans H. Reich, *Sprache und Politik* (Münchener Germanistische Beiträge, I, 1968).

WE ARE IN A PROCESS of profound change. I believe that the unstable, transitional status of time and personal identity, of the ego and of physiological death, will affect the authority and range of language. If these "historical universals" alter, if these syntactical foundations of perception are modified, the structures of communication will also change. Seen at this level of transformation, the much-discussed role of electronic media is only a symptom and out-rider.

It would be foolish to speculate further. But let us be entirely clear about what is involved. Much of the best that we have known of man, much of that which relates the human to the humane—and our future turns on that equation—has been immediately related to the miracle of language. Humanity and that miracle are, or have been hitherto, indivisible. Should language lose an appreciable measure of its dynamism,

man will, in some radical way, be less man, less himself. Recent history and the breakdown of effective communication between enemies and generations, as it harries us now, shows what this diminution of humanity is like. There was a loud organic and animal world before man, a world full of non-human messages. There can be such a world after him. Wallace Stevens heard its premonitory signals on a winter's day:

*The leaves cry. It is not a cry of divine attention,  
Nor the smoke-drift of puffed-out heroes, nor  
human cry.*

*It is the cry of leaves that do not transcend them-  
selves,*

*In the absence of fantasia, without meaning  
more*

*Than they are in the final finding of the air, in  
the thing*

*Itself, until, at last, the cry concerns no one at  
all.*

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## Father's Day

Thunderbreak of rage, the sun punched black;  
Snowmen fandangoed in the heatwave he ordered;  
He ripped the fields' green covers off and ground them to mulch.

His eyes trumpeted, declared frequent wars;  
His whims fell among us with crushing tonnage;  
Long promises and histories vanished like bubbles.

He stoked my belief in Father, the God,  
Whose vengeance was heavier than the big religious book.  
My tears and fears fuelled his engines of laughter.

And he has not changed. Nor I. But something has:  
Authority has been spirited away: each anger,  
Aspiration, impulse and hunger has become pitiable.

Belief has gone like a bubble. He is seventy-one  
And I must protect him; he is so vulnerable  
Stripped of my faith; he is younger than his youngest son.

**Vernon Scannell**

## Tales of Academe

### *Down and Out on the American Campus*

THERE IS an area in the academic world set between U.C.L.A. and the Bronx Community College filled with intellectual vagabonds, mental tramps, educational medicine men, too-wise and cunning graduate students, aristocratic débris whose fathers—seeing revolution coming in the 18th century—taught their sons a *métier*, Marxian fathers in search of peace, and hordes of workingmen's sons who believed in the purity of their professors' ideas; and then the multitude of down-and-out students who wander in this world looking for some spiritual nourishment. There are all kinds of currency in this world, and more than one way of being down-and-out.

This skid-row of the academic world is hidden, put out of sight, and some will even tell you that it does not exist except in the mind. It is for this reason that one can only catch glimpses of this land when in a firefly wink it opens up and we see it from the corner of our minds. A book review of a novel on academia begins: "The academic world must be a truly dreary place if all these tedious novels cascading down upon us are to be believed..." An article, humorously describing the American Historical Association's annual meeting (referred to again with intended humour as the "Slave Market") remarks: "Some come to make one more attempt before they sink into the oblivion of some tedious place in Iowa..." A classical scholar speaks of graduate schools: "The wretched pedantry, the meanness of motive, the petty rancour of rivalry, the stultifying professionalism... are as familiar as the air we breathe. We ourselves endured it and now, intolerably, we impose it on others. It is an old story, best avoided."

Unfortunately, it is just this avoided area that

bankrupts men. Perhaps because it is *best avoided* that this down-and-out land is a place where tragedy seems less tragic. A good man is found dead drunk in a nearby stream, but still dead, and it seems natural. An ageing man runs off with a young co-ed—much love is squandered, and friends and enemies remark, "Pity, but I expected that sort of thing." Someone's wife in the education department writes a short story about it that is rejected by a dozen magazines with the same phrase, "Oh, dear, this is such familiar ground." A promising student tries to hang himself and when he is cut down groans, "I was looking for an unfamiliar sound." And the old-timer raises his eyebrows, "I'm not surprised, really." There is no grieving here. Except for the boy just cut down who wails, "There's hardly an attempt to understand—it... I mean *understand*. It might explain this loosening of the natural tightness around my heart that makes me want to cry softly all day long..."

Everyone simply withdraws and grieves for himself, and reality of the world can only be approached obliquely, from the corner of one's eye, and an ear tilted for eavesdropping. Until it blows up in a furious rage.

"THEY SAY," one down-and-outer told me, "that Europeans always knew that something existed beyond the Atlantic before Columbus' voyage because of the flotsam and jetsam thrown up on their shores. Plants and trees that did not exist in Europe, and even bodies of strange men that had floated across the Atlantic. That's what I feel like—I keep bobbing up to remind people of this land that is beyond the oceans of their mind."

Another, a man who had been a forester before he went into English, looked upon himself as an itinerant, an Oakie of the academic world. He travelled in an old car, his kids and his wife in the back making peanut-butter sandwiches, his notes in the trunk of his car which he opened whenever he found, as he said, a grubby job. Then he chanted his litany for a while at some college, and when he heard of another grubby job, made a long-distance telephone call from someone else's phone, wrote a humorous letter, repacked his notes in the trunk of his car, and disappeared leaving a box of Kleenex in his desk and a note on a large pile of otherwise blank paper which read, "When they needed a Socrates, they hired a Luther." In the Fall his replacement comes, a replica, a near-doctor of philosophy from the University of Buffalo. He comes in a five-year-old station wagon, its edges rusted, with a wife, three young children—two from a first marriage—to settle in an apartment with no furniture but a rug and table, its legs cut down close to the floor, on it a long-stemmed rose in a green Italian *fiasco*. Within a week, diapers are stuffed beneath the radiators; within a month the wife is smoking pot again while the philosopher whimpers, "What is this *malaise* that permeates this goddam academic world?" While his wife lights up from the corner of the room and smiles.

The doctor of philosophy, a frail man who covered his Lutherlike anger with a forced Socratic smile—as if he had found his predecessor's note—stuttered, "We're in an exploding system and we scream through it like shrapnel." And his wife, all in puffing on her cigarette deeply and contentedly, repeats, "Keep it funny, man. Keep it funny."

There is one thing all these men and women have in common beside stomach disorders—they want to tell someone about it and, because they consider themselves intellectuals, they want to write about it or have someone, anyone, write about it. The long evenings spent together with colleagues would leave everyone with the word "depressed" pressed to his lips.

"Why can't it be written about?"

"Because writing distorts reality."

"Why?"

"Because you must choose. How can we write a novel and not choose? You end up with no hero, no unity, no non-hero, no drama, no suspense. Our world? The drama is the tediousness, the small crises that persist and are never

solved. It's enough to make strong men cry—softly. But then tragedy has a soft core."

THE COLLEGES contribute to this uneasiness, for they search for the Ph.D.s from Harvard, Yale and Columbia, who have published and, if they can't get them, are disappointed. Instead they settle for the person who "is working on his Ph.D." at Minnesota, and when this poor man comes from Duluth in a brand new station wagon—bought by his father-in-law who is a car salesman—with a wife and two children, they settle in the philosopher's vacated apartment, with no furniture but a High Fi set on top of which is a bucket with a bouquet of wheat his wife had gathered that summer in northern Minnesota. Within six weeks he learns that the gap between what he has been trained to do (let alone his aspirations) and what he is asked to do (to teach) is appalling—an abyss. He is soon trembling at faculty meetings as he shouts, "I wasn't trained to teach people to fit into the P.T.A. I wasn't trained to adjust the child to democratic living. Hell, that's indoctrination!" And it isn't long before all the students have, it seems to him, no business being in college. Teaching becomes a conversation between the deaf and the angry. He hates the administration who, he feels, perpetuate this as a plot in building their own empires. He concludes that administrators should only be allowed to sweep the corridors. Finally, he feels that the eye of the administration is upon him and, for the first time in his life—now in its 32nd or 33rd year—he discovers that this is the only way he can make a living. A fear grips him—that will lead to this *maligonia*—the nausea, the need to cry. The second year, in self-defence, he becomes the Rebel in Residence. The last time I saw him, he was furiously composing a funny letter, a gay and witty letter, which he told me he was going to send to 300 colleges asking if there was an opening in his field. He's down and out.

A YOUNG INSTRUCTOR, "Little Eddie Sunshine," as we came to call him, after six months of teaching economics in a Vermont experimental college, came to my home one night with a full bottle of Chartreuse liqueur and announced that he would not give me a drink. And while he drank, he muttered, "It's fixed."

"What's fixed?"

"This place."

"What do you mean?"

"This place. It's fixed—the faculty meetings, the Democratic Community crap. It's fixed. I'd like to goose all their minds."

Later that night they found him, his face green as the liqueur he had been drinking, in the girls' dormitory where, apparently, for one wild hour he had goosed every girl he found, shouting, "Open up your bowels and let the sunshine in."

Later, he said sadly, "It was the only way I could get to their minds."

He left shortly after for a Presbyterian college somewhere in Wisconsin. Before he left, he looked at me and said, "Somebody ought to write about this goddam hole."

The sociologist at the same experimental college devoted most of his time to reading and collecting novels about academia. He had read

them all, made notes on them all, kept files on them all. He considered Randall Jarrell's book, *Pictures from an Institution* (1959) the best of them all. The sociologist was a big man, unaware of his strength because he had never used it, who was constantly on the verge of going to sleep. In his cellar-office he would tell me, "There will soon be seven million college students and God knows how many professors. Let's hypothesise that there will be 300,000 professors. It might be as if the state of Vermont were to teach the whole state of North Carolina!" And he would drone on while he had one of his assistants make coffee for us, giving me figures from Ohio, New York, and California. He had the idea that only a man with no talent, a common man, could write about this world. "And it's important, you know. The world may soon be divided between students and teachers. A new class struggle is

## Female Fury

New York City

**WOMEN OF THE REVOLUTION.** Says Miss Bernadine Dohrn, the attractive and scholarly inter-organizational secretary of Students for a Democratic Society. "In almost any woman you can unearth an incredible fury. It is often not even a conscious, a threshold thing. But it's there, and it's an anger that can be a powerful radicalising force. To date, our movement has not really made room for the enormous political potential of women's repression."

More than 30 per cent of those arrested in Columbia's occupied buildings last spring were women.

Says Miss Robin Morgan, 27, who together with her husband, a poet and leftist writer, forms a "two-member commune": "You have to keep the revolution going in your own life. Having children in the Movement is a tremendous act of affirmation. If you really believe in what you believe, having a child becomes all the more radicalising, all the more reason to fight. . . . These kids growing up in the Movement face the greatest confrontation, but also the greatest possible hope. They may see the society that humankind has been dreaming about since the beginning. . . . With each passing day I am a little more willing to fight and die. . . ."

Josephine Biddle Duke, 19, child of a celebrated family of old and immense fortune, who entered Barnard College in the fall of 1967, was among the demonstrators who hurled bags of blood. Among the targets: the limousine of the State Department's former chief of protocol, Angier Biddle Duke, her uncle. . . . As a television crew prepared to film the scene, students in the front ranks raised their hands in the familiar V that

had been the emblem of student defiance only three months before. "Not V's!" barked Miss Duke, several ranks back, "Fists!" During the summer, national S.D.S. adopted the clenched fist as the symbol of revolutionary militancy. . . . Miss Duke has now withdrawn from Barnard "to give full time to the revolution." Says Miss Duke: ". . . I don't know when the revolution will come, maybe not in my lifetime. I only know there is no time for fence-sitting. . . . I think of the future only in terms of my being with The Movement. I change as The Movement changes."

Susan Adelman, 23, a member of Liberation News Service, began her radical odyssey at Berkeley, in 1964, just as the Free Speech movement was in full cry. The only child of a successful, self-made entrepreneur, she had grown up in the tense and cloying atmosphere of Beverly Hills. . . . She returned home in the summer of 1967 "really on fire." She found herself involved in an intricate schism within the Liberation News Service. She was among the truck-load of L.N.S. insurgents who participated in a pre-dawn raid on the Massachusetts farm of L.N.S. founder Marshall Bloom in an effort to retrieve a printing press and several thousand dollars expropriated from the New York offices. . . .

"Women bring to The Movement the ultimate revolutionary test," maintains Robin Morgan. "Sooner or later we are going to have a revolution because we must. But it has got to take place in a way that has never happened before—not just politically and economically, but in a cultural and even biological sense as well. The role of women is absolutely crucial to these new dimensions of revolution and liberation. . . ."

N.Y. SUNDAY TIMES MAGAZINE

in the air—and the professors who rule the graduate schools are now the monopoly capitalists. Someone must write about it. For two hundred years we've put our faith in higher education; now we're uneasy. But it must be humorous."

His wife, who kept files on every member of the faculty with the hope of one day writing a book, offered me all her files. "Take them," she smiled feebly. "It could make such a funny book. It really could, you know." As if this experience of the down-and-out world, returned as a book and paraded around would comfort them all. They would pass it from one to the other, like some surrogate judge wearing a polka-dot bow tie returned from Brooklyn to his native Sicily, reading its pages affectionately in spite of the fact that they know more than the book contained. I took her files and tape-recordings of faculty members she had gotten drunk for the occasion. "Please make it funny," she said.

But, then, so many in the down-and-out world hang on to humour to keep them from the edge of hysteria, while genuine laughter is suspect. For there is a good portion of this world that frowns constantly, a dreadful frown, as if there were something wrong with their urinary tract. What sours these men more than anything else is to see anyone else smiling.

In the experimental world there was a Master of English who wrote beautiful poetry about the Jewish prophets, and long philosophical pieces about truth and beauty in the voice of the angry one God Jchovah. He had that kind of mind that would be ruined by a Ph.D. He suspected this and it made him all the more angry, because without it, he knew he was doomed to teach Freshman English and wander in the down-and-out world forever. A finished poem made him smile, but when it came back from *Commentary*, oh, the wailing, the grieving. I could see all the suffering of the Jewish people in that man, as if the Jewish expression, "So, show me where it is written?" was meant as a command to him, personally, and he had failed himself, his people, and his God. On such occasions he would stare at a book by Saul Bellow and mutter, "Oh, these successful writers," and he would wander from room to room. "Oy, oy, I'm going to commit suicide. Oy, oy." He pulled his hair, his glasses slipped to the tip of his nose. In the kitchen he wailed beside the stove while his wife smiled, "Come, come. Let's have some fun. Come."

It was no wonder, then, that if ever he caught me smiling he would frown and shake his head. "Despair, despair, that's what you need."

He soon left the prophets to read Sartre and Kierkegaard, and was quickly convinced that wisdom lay just beyond despair. He was a nice-looking young man, and it did not become him. It made me smile to see such a nice-looking man talking about things beyond despair.

"What are you smiling at?" he shouted. And before I could answer, he growled, "So you think Sartre is a man for ugly people only, and only they should enjoy him?"

It all made me wonder what price had to be paid to be a writer, a Jewish writer. Last I heard, he was writing a novel "about the college," and it was going to be funny.

**M**ARXISM has always brought some comfort to those in the down-and-out world. It is understandable. My Marxian fakir friend with whom I shared a dingy office for a short time at some traditional college, would look up from his desk and say, "You expect Crane Brinton, the capitalist-millionaire of the academic world, to be a Marxist or even *not* to knock it? Man, are you kidding? His texts sell in the millions, paper-backs, the cheques rolling in."

"It's hard work just to type a book," I said.

"Soot, man, he gets himself a *braceros* to do that. Sure he has a sense of humour. He is witteece, witteece," and he frowned. "It's the humour of fat America looking at a starving world. Did you ever see that painting by Daumier—there's this fat Frenchman at a table loaded with food—leg of lamb, wine, bread, nuts, the whole bit. And there's a smile on his face, a real friggin' smile, and he is saying, '*Je suis ravitaillé*'—while there are hunger revolts all over Paris that they're putting down by killing and murdering people. It's the same thing with Crane Brinton—the Walt Disney of historians: I'm all right, Jack—frig you."

He had the built-in prudishness—a hint of the virtuous state he would build—and he never cursed, but used sounds that closely resembled cursing. And yet I thought he would be the happiest of all the people in the down-and-out world—teaching the sons and daughters of the working class. But he only answered, "Soot, man, these guys don't want a revolution. They want *in*. They want to get to the lousy trough."

And when all America is at the table, they'll have that smile: 'Moi, je suis ravitaillé—le reste, je m'en fous.' And to control his anger he laughed loudly, an uproarious laughter.

He was a man in his forties with the body of a gymnast that was beginning to stoop slightly. He had been to seven colleges and universities, mostly of the down-and-out variety; jobs had taken him all over the United States and

Canada. He had a Ph.D. in history from a Canadian university, and he knew everybody in the world of small left-wing magazines. He knew the deans of hundreds of colleges and promised you an interview for a job with someone at Boston College. He knew the wives of known authors. He had worked on a tobacco farm in Mississippi when he could not find a job. He said he was from Kansas, but later I

## The Booming Campus

Washington

WITH THE controversial dynamiting of Oaksapp University's historic old Slingborn Hall by student militants, the crisis of the American campus took a fresh turn last week.

Progressives in the field of higher education had long regarded Oaksapp as a model institution. Curriculum had been abandoned five years ago following protests in which President Dixby Dross was hanged from the historic old Oaksapp oak in the quadrangle, once the traditional site of campus football victory celebrations.

At the same time, Oaksapp instituted a system of student autonomy, gave undergraduates the right to unlimited chapel cuts and granted amnesty to the leaders of S.E.S. (Students for an Exterminated Society) who had led the demonstrations.

A RECENT REPORT by the American Association of University Students, an organization established by the National Congress of Campus Activists in 1977 to police the nation's universities, commended Oaksapp for its "relevance to today's world."

In doing so, it pointed to the installation of billiard tables in every dormitory, the licensing of liquor sales in the gymnasium and the decision to divide the school year into two six-week semesters.

Why then, alarmed educators have asked, were the students moved to dynamite historic old Slingborn Hall? The answer seems to be that Oaksapp, for all its "progressive" adaptation to student needs, has failed to recognise that there is a new mood on the American campus today.

THE SPOKESMAN for the new mood is the radical SURL (Student Union for Retirement Learning), which was formed last summer at a secret conference held at the Saginaw Blues Festival. The so-called Saginaw Manifesto declares that American universities have "wilfully and callously disregarded their obligation to prepare the concerned students of this country for retirement."

Hod Cassowary, the 43-year-old chairman of Oaksapp's SURL chapter, put it succinctly the morning after the dynamiting. "Students are tired of devoting 25 years of their lives to universities and then being turned out without so much as a gold watch," Cassowary said.

In meetings with student administrators before the explosion, Cassowary found the president and the trustees, whose average age is 19, "out of it." "I've been on this campus long enough to have earned seven master's degrees and four Ph.D.'s if we hadn't done away with curriculums," Cassowary declared, "and yet my needs are blithely ignored by a power structure of pipsqueaks. 'What are you complaining about?' they asked me. 'We let you have women in the dormitory any time you want.'"

IT IS NOW AGREED that President Burke, who is twenty years old, alienated many of Oaksapp's more decrepit students when he lightly dismissed Cassowary's demands with a quip. "Old Hod's just hod under the collar," he told the press. His prestige was further damaged when SURL seized his office, rifled his mail and discovered that he had been in correspondence with the Y.M.C.A., the 4-H clubs and other youth-oriented arms of the power elite.

To many persons, SURL's demands seem purposely devised to outrage the universities. Its central demand is for a programme under which every student would be able to retire, leave college and live on a full pension at the age of 45. Progressive educators argue that there is justice in this demand.

IF THE UNIVERSITIES are not going to prepare the individual to survive in an extra-campus environment, they believe, it is only fair for the universities to provide their own guarantees of post-college security. The university student today, it is argued, becomes perforce a disadvantaged member of society because of a system which denies him an education.

SURL also demands that Oaksapp establish a special department of retirement studies with courses in shuffleboard, European touring and checkers. This, of course, would violate the theory of unstructured curriculum.

Finally, Cassowary has demanded that Oaksapp be relocated in Jamaica or a similar environment "more relevant to the needs of retirement education." President Burke is open minded about this proposal. "If there are a few more dynamitings," he says, "we'll have to rebuild somewhere."

RUSSELL BAKER in *The New York Times*



found that he was from Kerala, India, and for a short time he had been a Methodist.

When I knew him, he wore dozens of buttons on the wide lapels of his outmoded suit, buttons that called for peace, for the freedom of the Negro people. His pockets were filled with pamphlets and books. The window of his office sported a peace pigeon perched on the words "STOP THE WAR IN VIET NAM." The patriots of the campus had thrown bags filled with mud at it and drawn with fingers in it a four-lettered word that one student for a Democratic Society had turned into "BOOK YOU."

My Marxian fakir stayed two years at our college in the provinces and then left without saying good-bye to anyone. He was truly a down-and-outer, a figure out of Gorky's memoirs or Conrad's stories who had led a kind of Lord Jim existence; his steering mechanism crippled, he drifted, his mind still raging against the storms that had brought him here. And, yet, he survived the best of all. For he had qualities some Marxists have of getting along so well in the capitalist world. He comforted me, too, somehow, for he gave me the feeling that the world, with some patience, might be put right after all.

**I**NTIMACY between faculty and students is encouraged in the experimental down-and-out world where professors, like saints, are called by their first names. It is this saintly quality which the experimental community demands that makes me think that a civilisation should be measured not by its successes, but by its failures. (After all, I know of no saints, as yet, to have come from Harvard—although a number of contemporary gods have been reported to have been graduated into this world.) Certainly, it is true of this down-and-out learned world, where successes are bought at the expense of failures. It is a banality to say that our colleges' success is weighted by the number of students who get into graduate schools. The students in both the experimental and traditional schools are aware of this; that they are being exploited and it makes them cry, or take to pot. But, then, the first look at reality is startling.

The student in the experimental down-and-out colleges is in the skid-row of the academic world, and he knows it—sooner or later. Ignored, usually not accredited, the graduate can become at best a social worker in some

Department of Welfare. He comes from all corners of the American middle class, the very wealthy, some working class—and all "ethnic groups," to use their phrase. But, on the whole, they have one thing in common—they are the children of the radicals of the 1930s.

A few of them come from the establishment schools—Amherst, Oberlin, Dartmouth, and the like, where they spent a year or two and then fled. When you ask them why they left, most of them shrug their shoulders and say nothing and look as if they would cry.

Some, however, are older students who have bounced around the academic world as have their faculty counterparts: University of Maryland, William and Mary, Boston U. extension courses, community colleges, night schools in Cleveland and, at age 24 or 25, they show up here where they are given two years' credit for four years of wandering. They come as down-and-outers; one student said, "I'm just a re-tread." It took him seven years to graduate. "If you stay here long enough, you get to like it."

Another student who had bounced from permissive school to military prep school, who considered himself "About as educated as a pin-ball," and who indeed viewed the world as a pin-ball machine, came with a bare knowledge of reading and none of writing. When I first knew him, he walked around the grounds winter and summer with a red lumberman's cap pulled down over his ears. He was to write his senior thesis on alcoholism. To study the problem "through experience," he built a still in the closet of his room in Dewey Dorm and made rice beer in two huge crocks he kept in another closet. Every May he gave a gala party to celebrate his new brew. In the years I knew him, each day he appeared on the noon lunch-line already drunk. One day he simply left and joined the skid-row of the experimental community—a group of students who found the experimental world phoney and who settled in the abandoned hill farms like so much *débris*, just close enough to remind the college that they were still there.

About every ten days or so—as if to prove that ten days was the extent any man can remain alone—late in the evening when the student community was left to itself, they would descend upon the college grounds, hand out pot, talk about suicide, and in the early hours of the morning, fornicate in the theatre, to express their creativeness.

I often saw my lumberman student, his red cap pulled down, riding a crumpled Vespa from Sears Roebuck; behind him, a pale-faced girl, her long red hair flowing out behind, her swollen belly nestled into his back. I couldn't help but notice whenever they rode that their faces were at the point of crying and, because of the way they rode, back to belly, neither was aware of it.

The girl was from Maine and she had been a member of the experimental community for two years. She never combed her hair; she rarely washed; but she loved to take long walks in the woods when it rained, and in the clearings she gathered mushrooms which she ate raw, dipping them in a large jar of mayonnaise. Gathering and eating mushrooms were the only activities she showed any enthusiasm for. And yet there was an animal smell about her that was feminine and vulgar, whore-like—so necessary to arouse lust in 19-year-olds. If she didn't brush her teeth, nonetheless, her breath smelled of freshly opened oysters. She didn't smoke or drink, and she only took marijuana to be sociable, and welcomed any male to her bed from the crippled to the most handsome, with a sense of liberation that many educators of *the whole child* have been looking for for generations. When she became pregnant and began to smell of warm milk and her complexion took on that white winter-butter look, she said nothing to anyone, not even her intimate counsellor, and moved out to the farm house with the rest of the débris. Although she never said it, her presence, her wide green eyes, her full mouth, her quiet arrogance in wearing nothing but a gingham dress, said, "I'm here, damn you, I'm here."

On several occasions she appeared beside me and I walked with her. In this way I had a few conversations with her and I found she had read—I was about to say *everything*—a great deal. She could read French and German and Italian. Now she read nothing, and wrote only one poem, as far as I know, which ended, "My grandfather pressed me in the album of his heart like a butterfly."

The last time I talked to her, she gave me a paperback book, Raymond Aron's *A Century of Total War*. "Have a banality," she said, smiling arrogantly. "Have a brilliant banality," she repeated and she left.

THE EXPERIMENTAL COMMUNITY of down-and-outers tell themselves that they are brilliant and

the rest of the world is corrupt beyond correction. It was habit to call those they agreed with "brilliant," so that the old-timer was referred to by his students as "a brilliant listener." One fell in love only with brilliant people. It was understandable, if their teachers were brilliant and some of their friends were as well, then they weren't so mediocre.

So my girl's phrase, "Have a banality," caught me up. One aspect of down and outness in the academic world is the realisation that after much reading of the world's wisdom, one can only come up with a few banalities. Have a banality, then: "*Love is good. War is bad.*"

### — Non-Reading Writers —

New York

THEY are under 30, they are self-assured but nervously angry. They hardly read, but they write.

"No, I don't read, I don't have the patience," said James Kunen, the author of *The Strawberry Statement*, a recent book on his experiences last year as a participant in the student strike at Columbia University. "It's just easier to go to a movie and let it all wash over you."

The one modern author who appears to have the most relevance for them is Kurt Vonnegut Jr. "He's the one writer I've read more than one book of," said young Kunen. *Mother Night* is my favourite. It's him at his best. It very strongly stresses the blurriness of good and evil and the gratuitousness of how things come about.

"Writers under 30 may be a different breed because their most powerful images are cinematic—that's what they grew up with," said talkative Texas born Mr. Craig Karpel. "Writers now want to create a printed passage as vivid as a movie scene. It's a rare young writer who doesn't know that he's more consistently moved by what he sees on the screen than what he reads."

"We are a generation raised on rock 'n' roll," said Tom Smucker. "You read Hemingway or *Death in Venice* in college and there was no meaning for us."

"You may have thought pop was trivial, but you knew there was something real about it," he went on. "It's where people were at. You can't pretend you're not part of this culture and you have to deal with it."

Sally Grimes put it just another way. "I find I'm reading less and less. I really don't know why," said the 27-year-old reporter for *The Philadelphia Bulletin*. "My friends don't read much either. Everything seems boring. I'm beginning to wonder just how many people are reading. It's ironic, I guess, here we are writers who don't read. That's life, I suppose."

NEW YORK TIMES

PEACE BE WITH YOU." It is the lot of the mediocre to be peeling off banalities to students for years. And it might be the cause of the uneasy turmoil in the academic circles all over the world. The mediocre are stretched beyond their abilities until they must admit to themselves that they are mediocre, and they rage.

Is it any wonder then that education, for them, has corrupted the world? Examinations, lectures, requirements, term papers, credits, grades, publishing professors, impersonal deans—all is pretentious mediocrity. And what for? To become a publishing and perishing professor yourself?

Convinced, then, that all other education is worthless, it is not difficult to believe that the experimental world is the only truly creative place. Here all is "creative": there is creative painting, creative dancing, creative speaking, creative poetry, creative recreation, creative and intense relationships, and, finally, creative creativity. It's as if the cynical tag, "*If you can't do, teach,*" had been turned inside out, and those who can't create have simply pulled the word like a curtain to cover all—or most—of the simple and necessary functions of daily life.

Yet all this sustains the Community. It exhilarates them and this exhilaration, sustained over too long a period, brings about hysteria and collapse. It is understandable that the well-meaning revolutionaries of 1793–94 in France went astray: Robespierre died of revolutionary exhilaration—which led them to believe the absolute righteousness of their cause.

Is it little wonder that within a short time they huddle together for comfort in little communities of their own on the periphery of Greenwich Village or some quarter of Washington, D.C., or, God help us, start a kindergarten in Minnesota or a down-and-out college of their own in New Hampshire?

IT IS DIFFICULT TO TELL about the students in the down-and-out traditional colleges. You have less to do with them. They keep their distance and you keep yours. Still, over the years, you catch glimpses from the corner of the mind. A slight boy asked with a queer smile, "What do you think of a teacher who makes you see all the injustices in the world and gives you no answers?"

"Well, it's better than giving you the answers," I said.

"No, I mean, isn't it better *not* to be made aware of them?"

"You *could* do something. . . ."

He interrupted me as if he had heard all this before, with one of the most despairing remarks I've ever heard. "But what if you haven't got any talent? . . ."

Here is the heart of the down-and-out world. Banalities are accepted, despondence of the wise ignored, for the simple fact that the institution wants to survive to accomplish something—achievement at any price. Is this the difficulty, then? That we've been told we're creative in order to fulfil the ambitions of others? Is it this that can make a student at 20 say with tears in his voice, "*But what if you haven't got any talent?*" The student in the down-and-out traditional college believes this to be so. He has a built-in sense of inferiority. The little confidence he has, he doesn't trust.

In a moment of anger, I said to a particularly down-and-out group, "What you people need here is a good Ivan Ivanovich, a good Communist, to make you think about your own values!" A hulk of a boy then seemed to come to life and he made a remark that made my heart sink for this country—if you will permit this odd-shaped patriotism. "But what if he convinces us?" he said, matter-of-factly.

The down-and-outers here prefer hunger to nourishment, ignorance to the difficulties of, if not enlightenment, then thinking. So that many sit with their good faces turned up, asking, "Please educate me." Others sleep with their eyes wide open. The wise grin at you slyly and seem to say, "Educate me, I dare you." It's enough to make anyone down-and-out.

WHAT BANALITY can I peel for you as a conclusion—for conclusions, I am told, are important. The down-and-out area in American academia is vast and growing. There is much confusion down here among students and faculty, faculty and administration who feel something must be done, anything, just get something done. And for the moment it seems like the confusion of the manure heap. But I'm sure of one thing—the future lies with this heap of manure. The privileged are dead or dying, and may they enjoy the privileges of an expiring class—but I'd advise them to learn a trade or, at least, teach their sons one. For the heap is slowly turning over, as if by the consent of two generations, and for a moment there might be the smell of newly turned earth. Given time, a flower or two must bloom.

# Bombs in Bolzano

## Letter from the South Tyrol

*"Somewhere in the Alps tonight armed men are on the move with their packs full of dynamite and pamphlets. Somewhere Italian troops are patrolling for them or waiting in ambush.*

*"Each week now brings its report of shots exchanged, of explosions in Italian police barracks at the Brenner, of a man maimed or killed. The 'South Tyrol question' seems to be rising towards a new climax."* NEWS ITEM

ON A GREY November morning in 1918 the South Tyrolese woke up to find themselves a minority on Italian soil. They were as unprepared for the shock as a man would be who had never in his life tried to swim, but suddenly found himself struggling for life in the unfamiliar element. Half a century later they still have not got over the shock, and they are still extremely bad swimmers. The best they can do is to defiantly and desperately keep their heads above water; their self-pitying shouts for help are mixed with bitter curses.

There are many national groups that have little talent for the life of a minority. Are there any so hopelessly untalented and ill-adapted to it as the quarter-of-a-million South Tyrolese?

Originally it was no fault of theirs. History treated them with quite exceptional perfidy. Their fate might have been devised by political chemists as a test-tube experiment to see what happens when ill-assorted nationalities are mixed. A population with a national life of its own—whose favour had once been wooed by the Holy Roman Emperor—was reduced to

subjection overnight. The freest farmers in Europe were incorporated in a country of sharecroppers and near-serfs that had no experience of independent farmers and peasants. And the most Tyrolean of the Tyrolese awoke in an Italy that was the last state but one in Europe to achieve national unification, was the last to be centralised, was in 1918 still living spiritually in the age of Cavour, and was quite incapable of accepting a national minority as such. Not merely two nationalities and two languages, but two utterly conflicting outlooks on life clashed uncomprehendingly. The patriarchal, conservative peasant austerity of the South Tyrolese found itself at grips with an Italy involved in a 19th-century dream of industry and progress.

The Tyrolese had enjoyed exceptional privileges since the 13th century. They managed to obtain some of these when the Counts of Tyrol—originally lords only of the Vintschgau (now Val Venosta)—united under their hereditary rule the counties of the Pustertal (Pusteria) and the valleys of the Eisack (Isarco), Etsch (Adige), and Inn. In 1363, when the country passed to the Habsburgs (*not* to Austria), they secured for it a special position among the principalities of the Holy Roman Empire.

The Tyrolese farmers were never "*ehr und wehrlos*" (unarmed and without honour). Elsewhere the right to bear arms was reserved to the nobility; it was later extended to their mercenaries, and eventually to the standing army. But from 1511 the whole Tyrolese people possessed the chartered privilege of bearing arms, for in that year the Emperor Maximilian issued an edict making them responsible for the defence of their own territory but exonerating them from military service outside it. What a token of confidence between the master in the throne-room and the masters in the farmhouses! No other *Untertan* of the Habsburgs enjoyed such a distinction, and no other subjects repaid it with such loyalty. In 1703, during

WHEN the bombs get thrown in Bolzano, Europe seems to be on the verge of a little nineteenth-century war. We return to the problem of present-day minorities (see F. R. Allemann's study of Alsace, ENCOUNTER, November 1964) with this unhappy case-history of a "forced marriage." INGE SANTNER is a Viennese author and journalist.

the War of the Spanish Succession, Tyrolese farmers checked both the *Roi Soleil* and the Electors of Bavaria. In 1809, the year of Andreas Hofer's insurrection, Tyrolese (above all South Tyrolese) farmers fought the Wars of Liberation against Napoleon to the bitter end. They covered the rear of the Austrian army during the latter's battles in Italy in 1848, 1859 and 1866. And it was they who defended the South Tyrol with their companies of riflemen when it was denuded of troops after the Italian declaration of war in 1915.

POLITICAL FREEDOM went hand in hand with freedom to bear arms. With the three original cantons of Switzerland and the Vorarlberg, the Tyrol was one of the earliest farmer-oriented democracies. As early as the 14th century, farmers were among the recipients of charters of freedom, which were addressed to "all noblemen, houses of God, all towns, villages and markets, and everyone, whether noble or not, rich or poor, whatever they may be or wherever they may live, in the *Grafschaft* of Tyrol. . . ." At the same time the country communes attained a wide measure of self-government, and private property in land was guaranteed and declared to be hereditary and alienable.

Under this many-stitched protective mantle of freedoms there was such a flourishing of the arts that later authors did not hesitate to describe the South Tyrol (a little fulsomely) as the "land of European talent." Is it chance that the oldest frescoes in the German-speaking world are to be seen in the church of St. Proculus near Naturns in the Vintschgau? Perhaps. But it is certainly no mere chance that a copy of the *Nibelungenlied* was found in the castle of Obermontani, that Michael Pacher came from the Pustertal, that Rosengarten is believed to have been the scene of the epics about Dietrich von Bern, that Hans Ried of Bozen in 1511 noted down the epic of Gudrun in his *Heldenbuch an der Etsch* (thank heaven he did so, because his copy is the only one to survive), and that both Walther von der Vogelweide and Oskar von Wolkenstein came from the valley of the Eisack. The South Tyrol was a Gothic land which was spared the cultural ravages of both the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. It remained intact and open to the world, giving and taking from both north and south. It gave to Lower Austria the great baroque painter Paul Troger and to Augsburg the rococo artist Johann Holzer, and it attracted into the country a great deal of German and Italian art, which penetrated into the little valleys and is still carefully preserved there.

"A time bomb exploded in a carriage of the Munich-Rome passenger express while it was stopped at the Brenner Pass frontier station tonight. Police blamed the incident on terrorists demanding the union of the South Tyrol with Austria or a greater Germany." NEWS ITEM

NO, IT WAS NO mediocre territory with soft earth and soft inhabitants that the Italians annexed in 1918 and proposed to administer after the pattern of ninety-one other provinces. It was no plasticine country of obedient *sudditi* such as every national state prefers.

To add to the difficulties in the way of a successful marriage between Rome and Bozen (Bolzano), there were the psychological obstacles. Non-understanding between South Tyrolese and Italians did not just date from 1918. For more than 150 years it had been accumulating into orgies of mutual distrust.

Again history was responsible, or more particularly the little Corsican with his great ambition. As part of his imperial policy, Napoleon made a reality of the *italianità* of which Italian patriots had dreamt for 200 years and put together a united Italy. True, his Kingdom of Italy collapsed again, but the idea of the national state survived. It remained firmly planted in the heads of the Italian intelligentsia, and profoundly alarmed the Austrians. The "Royal and Imperial" house in Vienna saw its power, nay, its very existence, threatened. It was indeed hard to reconcile nationalism with the principles on which the Austrian Empire was based. Could the Emperor grant liberty to Lombardy, Venetia, and Tuscany today without losing Croatia or Galicia tomorrow? Italy, the germ-cell of nationalism, was the arch-enemy. Austria saw itself forced to take up the struggle, and it was a grim one, with disgraceful and macabre high-points such as the spectacular execution of Cesare Battisti in Trento.

Needless to say, the South Tyrolese took a prominent part in the struggle. As the most loyal of all the Habsburg loyalists, they felt it incumbent upon them to keep a careful watch on their suspect neighbours in the Trentino. The Italians were later to go on suspecting for years that if the South Tyrolese were offered a little finger they would try to grasp the whole hand, but at this time the South Tyrolese were just as incurably suspicious of them. The Trentino's just demands for autonomy failed on their veto. Their narrow-mindedness even prevented the opening of an Italian-language grammar school at Innsbruck, which as capital of the "one and indivisible" crown territory of the Tyrol belonged to the Trentino. It all became a matter of the laws of action and reaction. In their opposition to the nationalism of

their southern neighbours the Tyrolese became even more fanatically nationalist. They smashed the windows of Trentino shop-keepers—their fellow-citizens—in Innsbruck and threatened them with lynch justice. There could not conceivably have been a worse prelude to the post-war cohabitation between Italians and South Tyrolese, when it was the turn of the latter to demand autonomy.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST, the prompt annexation of the South Tyrol—the much-beaten Italians marched into Bozen in the guise of victors only four days after the armistice—found all those involved practically equally unprepared. It's not in the history books, but it can be shown from documents that when Italy was assured of a frontier on the Brenner by the London secret agreement of April 1915, she did not believe that it would ever be possible for the promise to be carried out. As for the South Tyrolese, until the cease-fire they had been ensconced behind an intact front; they had never been noted for political far-sightedness, and they refused to the last to believe that the war was lost. On the contrary, in the spring of 1918 their representatives at the "Sterzinger Diet" were still demanding a shifting of the frontier to the southern foot of the Alps.

What did it avail that after the occupation of Bozen General Percori-Giraldi, the Italian military commander, announced his Government's intention of "carefully and amicably settling all the language and cultural questions of the Alto Adige"? Or that in 1919-20 the King, Government, and Parliament of Italy solemnly pledged the South Tyrolese autonomy and the maintenance of their national identity (in order not too obviously to offend against the flourishing Wilsonian cult of national self-determination)?<sup>1</sup> The forced marriage was bound to founder. Soon after the peace negotiations of St. Germain, which confirmed Rome in the possession of the South Tyrol, its new

masters dropped the mask. A ruthless process of Italianisation set in. Its only piquant feature was that it was called "re-Italianisation," because Ettore Tolomei, the Italian "High Commissioner for Language & Culture," claimed that the South Tyrolese were wrongfully Germanised Romans.

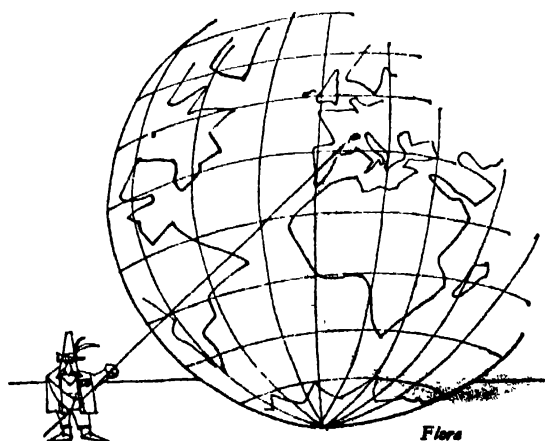
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*"Signor Paolo Taviani, Italian Minister of the Interior, assured Parliament and the country tonight that a precise and unequivocal directive had been formulated to combat terrorism in the South Tyrol. 'Terrorism will be fought without any holds being barred, and there will be no delay in applying the necessary measures.'"*

NEWS ITEM

AFTER THE FASCIST accession to power in 1922 the South Tyrolese were forced to realise to the full that a minority in a national state had only one duty, i.e., to get lost. German communal administrations were dismissed, German schools abolished, German names obliterated even in the cemeteries, and German political parties banned. The Italian defence of this behaviour to a moderately indignant world was that in the old days the South Tyrol had formed part of the Roman Empire and had only later been occupied by "mountain barbarians." Thus restoration of the original state of affairs was not just legitimate, it was actually a moral obligation. With the Fascist fondness of doing things on a grand scale, this excuse also served to justify the establishment of an industrial zone at Bolzano and the compulsory re-settlement of Italian workers in the heart of German-speaking areas.

The extent to which the policy of "Italianisation" succeeded is shown by statistics. In 1910 the population of the province of Bozen (as it was then called) consisted of approximately 235,000 South Tyrolese and 7,000 Italians (3 per cent). According to the 1939 census the Germans numbered 256,000 and the Italians had increased to 81,000, or 32 per cent. The "national extinction" of the South Tyrolese seemed finally assured when at the dictators' meeting in Rome Hitler, in the name of the *Vorsehung* he so frequently invoked, recognised "*für immer*" the frontier on the Brenner ("manifestly drawn by providence and the history of our two peoples"). From this it was but a step to the Himmler agreement of 23rd June, 1939, which quite openly confronted the South

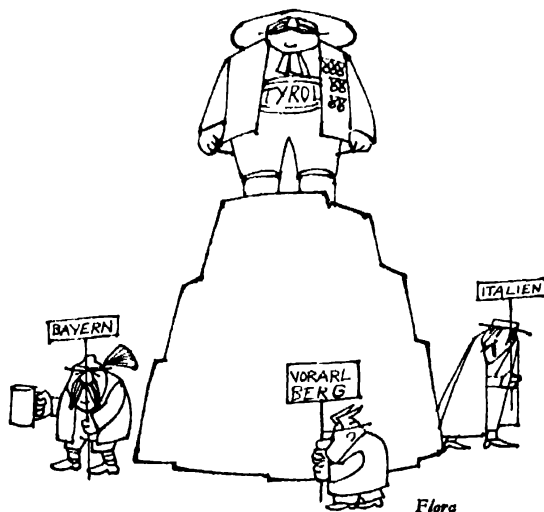


<sup>1</sup> Freud and Bullitt wrote in their study of *Woodrow Wilson* (1967): "... He forgot the location of the Brenner Pass and thus delivered two hundred and fifty thousand German-Austrians to Italy. ..."

Tyrolese with the alternatives of migrating "heim ins Reich" or being left helplessly at Italian mercy. In desperation 213,000 (or 86 per cent of those who were given the choice) opted for German citizenship. The fact that in practice only 76,000 packed their bags and moved to the Third Reich did not prevent the group as a whole from feeling they had now for a second time been sacrificed to world politics. In 1915 the Western powers had sold them to the Italians to secure Italian intervention in the war, and now the Rome-Berlin Axis was confirmed at their expense.

At the end of World War II they saw themselves sold for the third time. Again they appealed for self-determination, and petitions signed by the whole voting population called for reunification with the North Tyrol. But eventually they had to content themselves with the Paris agreement of 1946 between De Gasperi and the Austrian Foreign Minister Karl Gruber for the "granting of autonomous regional legislative and executive power." It took ten weeks of tough negotiation to achieve that. For the West (in view of the Communist menace in Italy) could not afford to see any weakening of De Gasperi's position.

SINCE THEN whole libraries have been written on whether Gruber (himself a Tyrolese) was or was not outwitted by the crafty Italians. Or whether the Austrian Foreign Minister realised that the predominantly German-speaking province of Bolzano, put in the same autonomous pot as the predominantly Italian province of Trentino, was bound to be outvoted. Or whether it was voluntarily or under coercion that the South Tyrolese politicians abandoned autonomy for Bolzano. Above all, whether or not in the past eighteen years Italy had faithfully carried out her pledge of "autonomy."



Rome pats itself complacently on the back and maintains that the pledge has been more than fulfilled. But violent complaints come from Vienna and Bolzano. All the parties involved have sound arguments to back their case—since the Paris agreement was formulated in such vague terms that it permits all sorts of interpretations. Theory will not help. What does the South Tyrol look like in practice?

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*"Some 7,000 police and carabinieri are taking part in security precautions today to thwart a possible terrorist attack in Rome on Friday, the anniversary of Italy's victory over Austrian troops in 1918. The huge monument to King Victor Emanuel II, which is also the tomb of Italy's unknown soldier, has been closed to the public."*

NEWS ITEM

THE FIRST THING that strikes one is the far-reaching Italianisation of the towns. Bolzano is 80 per cent Italian (of its 75,000 inhabitants only 16,000 are Germans), Merano (Meran) 61 per cent, and Bressanone (Brixen) 44 per cent. They are a variegated mixture. In the ancient arcades and blocks of modern flats, groups of South Tyrolese alternate with groups of Italians, and sometimes the two actually intermingle. There can be no denying that the face of the towns has benefited from Italian attention: the rather provincial cheeks of yesterday have been touched up with traces of big-town make-up. The Italians have also changed the faces of the young. In every office there are teenage girls with pale cherry mouths (pale lips are in fashion) and coquettishly fluttering dark eyelids. "Typical Italian girls," the connoisseur says to himself—until the little cherry mouths open and pure Bozen-German dialect pours forth. When they come to town to do their shopping the South Tyrolese young men wear their traditional blue aprons and wide short coats. But the young townsmen, who greet each other outside the cinemas with the Italian "Ciao," prefer the risk of bursting the seams of their elegantly cut, narrow Florentine suits. Could the present generation of South Tyrolese town-dwellers do without the chromium glitter of the Italian *espresso* bars, the charming trifles in the Italian boutiques, the Italian passion for motor-car noise, for blaring radio sets, for eloquent declarations of hostility and even more eloquent declarations of friendship? Many honestly confess: no.

About 40 per cent of the German-speaking young people can talk colloquial Italian fluently and without accent. I found that only when some more difficult subject is broached do deficiencies appear in their vocabulary. They find

themselves at a loss and search helplessly for phrases and expressions. Many South Tyrolese have long been working on equal terms in the industrial zone at Bolzano (once the symbol and the instrument of Italianisation). Spaghetti is likely to be served for the evening meal even in national-minded South Tyrolese households—while their Italian neighbours may well be enjoying a dish of smoked sausage from the Ultental. And the number of mixed marriages (which are of course never mentioned, even unofficially) mounts from year to year. There are plenty of examples of this even among the fanatical advocates of “preserving *Deutschtum*, the German way of life.” Dr. Magnago, for instance. His Italian father was born at Rovereto, his mother came from the Vorarlberg, and his wife from Essen.

However, the hard reality of the mountain farmers is still “*rein deutsch*” (pure German) far removed from the lax nationalism of the South Tyrolese towns, which as ancient trade centres are inclined to compromise and interchange (as early as 1809 the chroniclers branded the men of Bozen as “failures” in the struggle for liberation).

True, the much used and nearly always misused words *rein deutsch* stick in the throat, for the South Tyrolese are not by any means pure German. Every valley has, so to speak, its own popular admixture. The dark-haired inhabitants of the Sarn Valley (Val Sarentina) boast of their descent from the Goths (though the only possible candidate for the honour in this respect can be the swarthy Teia, the last King of the Ostrogoths). The people of the Pustertal (Pusteria) through whose blue eyes the “German soul” would at first sight seem most likely to shine, are at least partially of Slavonic origin. The people of the Eisack (Isarco) Valley are Germanised Latins; the thin, dark inhabitants of the Untervinschgau (Lower Val Venosta) are a mixture of Rhaeto-Romans and Bavarians; and the compact settlements of small and minute farmers in the Obervinschgau (Upper Val Venosta) show that it remained Roman longest of all and knew nothing of the Tyrolese inheritance-law that enabled farms to be handed down without being broken up.

SO THE SOUTH TYROLESE VALLEYS are not as “German” as all that. But all the same, they made their contributions to German history for centuries, and everywhere the castles of Tyrolese-German noble families cling like eagles’ eyries to the rocks. Everywhere German is spoken (though a Berliner or Hamburger would have difficulty with the local dialects), and everywhere the children master Italian no better than German children master Latin. In

this respect, since 1918 there have been hardly any changes. Italians are not interested in trying to make a living from fields that slope at an angle of forty degrees, pulling the plough by hand. The lonely life of the high valleys, so near to God and so far from human company, has no attraction for them; they are satisfied with the towns. Even the Fascists said resignedly, “We can’t take over the mountains...”

Thus there is no parallel between the Italianised life of the towns and life on the mountain farms. The two are separated by far more than a difference in altitude of three or four thousand feet. But one thing they have in common: in both there is little or no perceptible trace of the proverbial “Italian yoke.”

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“‘Union with Austria’ extremists of Italy’s Alto Adige region issued a virtual declaration of war against Italian authority today by announcing a stepped-up terrorism campaign. The proclamation enumerated seven categories of targets, from army posts to post offices and Italian-owned shops and hotels, warning that approaching them ‘is forbidden and involves danger of death.’”

NEWS ITEM

THE ITALIAN MASTERS of the present may be deficient in psychological acumen and still fail to understand the ponderous South Tyrolese. They are probably also offended and mistrustful chauvinists, trembling for the last of their “colonies” and reluctant to make concessions for fear of encouraging the South Tyrolese to renew their demand for self-determination. They are quite certainly bureaucrats working under a chaotic, out-of-date, and often vexatious legislative system. But they are no longer the brutal oppressors they were in the Fascist days.

Today the South Tyrolese live as free citizens. Their traditional peculiarities are not encouraged (the Italians, being still nationalists themselves, could hardly be expected to do that) but are fully tolerated. Their children can attend *kindergärten* and schools, where their German-speaking teachers have complete freedom to choose school books from Bonn or from Vienna. There is nothing to offend their national pride, or to prevent them from becoming lawyers (for which a knowledge of Italian law is of course necessary). Numerous scholarships to German and Austrian universities are open to them. The Italian State subsequently recognises their degrees just as magnanimously as it refrains from imposing restrictions on their free choice of occupation. The civil service is also open to them without restriction



and (what is more) a kind of guarantee is to be given to South Tyrolese officials that in future they will not be transferred elsewhere (a privilege not enjoyed by any other Italian employees). The allegedly "oppressed" South Tyrolese have complete liberty to form German associations, bawl German songs, print German newspapers, vote for German parties, and listen to German sermons. They benefit economically from regional credits (for the spending of which the province of Bolzano shares responsibility). There is nothing to stop the Bolzano business man from cocking a snook at the tax-collector just as successfully as his fellow tax-payers in Milan or Naples; and no law prevents the fruit-growers of the Sarentina or Isarco valleys from acquiring further land. Fully 96 per cent of the soil in the province of Bolzano is in South Tyrolese hands, and South Tyrolese have been able to buy many fruit farms in the Po valley without the Italians having yet denounced "Bozen economic imperialism."

ITALIAN MIGRATION to the area has come practically to a standstill. Inflow and outflow practically cancel each other out. In view of this, any talk of "state-promoted Italianisation" and the "South Tyrolese march to extinction" looks like impudent Goebbels-style propaganda. The facts are even less suitable to justify the "desperation" of the *dinamitardi*.

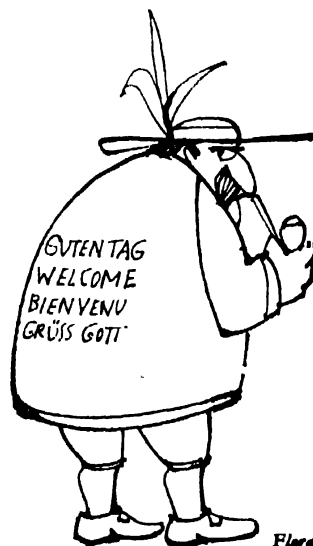
In short, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that in their unending warfare against the Italian authorities the South Tyrolese, with their much-vaunted risking of life and limb, are fighting for no more than "the Emperor's beard." Their grumbles at official level and bomb-throwing at private level are aimed at unattainable objectives. What is the use of going on stubbornly complaining at being administered by a predominantly Italian civil service—when they have a panic horror of the low state salaries and have no thought themselves of spending a lifetime at an office desk? What is the point in clamouring for a legal ban on the entry of outsiders—when only a trickle of Italians come to Bolzano in any case—and Italy, as a member of the Common Market, is pledged to freedom of choice of place of work?

No doubt a number of keys are out of tune on the legislative keyboard of the "Bolzano-Trent Autonomous Regional Government," but with goodwill and a little adroitness it could be played upon quite passably.

<sup>3</sup> Recent bombings were the exclusive responsibility of neo-Nazis from Germany and Austria. To the extent that South Tyrol youth participated they were misled adventurers.

BUT, ALAS, the South Tyrolese will not play. At most they grimly strun from time to time a rifleman's march. A people that, in the past, so readily went out and undertook responsibility now stays at home, sulking in the corner. During the years when they were the helpless pawns of the Great Powers they lost their self-confidence, and they have hermetically sealed themselves off inside their martyrs' mentality. Since the conclusion of the Treaty of Paris they have been waiting for the great miracle from outside that never came—for a satisfactory ending of Italian-Austrian negotiations, for a favourable decision by the United Nations, for an intervention by the Federal Republic, and heaven-knows-what-else. Even in their terrorist outrages they subjected themselves to impulses from abroad.<sup>2</sup> Strangely enough, it rarely strikes this tough and industrious people that it would be a good idea to take on the problems of its own destiny itself.

They have not lost their pride. However high an opinion they may sometimes have of individual Italians, they always talk with contempt of the Italians in general. They regard them as "culturally backward," "lazy," "incompetent," "totally incapable of any kind of organisation." This feeling of superiority *ought* to give them sufficient self-confidence to take the risk of going out and competing with them—but it does nothing of the sort. On the contrary, what they want is to live in a glass case with as many chartered rights and privileges and as few risks as possible. The negotiations of the so-called "commission of 19" on the surrender of certain regional rights to the province of Bolzano was in the last resort nothing but haggling about a legalistic Maginot Line at Salorno. The South Tyrol is already



running the risk of becoming in the not-too-distant future a kind of Alpine reserve in the midst of a united Europe. Thanks to its fortress-farmhouses, gothic shrines, gaily decorated village chapels and red-and-white painted shutters, it would be very romantic and picturesque—but it would be hopelessly cut off from the progress of the time.

The lack of civil courage of a people that played its part so manfully in every war must of course have its causes. It is cultivated with almost pedantic zeal by the South Tyrolese *Volks partei*, the only party that represents German interests in the province of Bolzano. It has flourished only too well on its policy of uncompromising opposition to the wicked Italians. "The best politician is he who hurls most abuse on the Italians" is its well-tryed motto. By painting an oversize picture of Rome as an always dangerous, always unpredictable, enemy it has been able to hammer into South Tyrolese heads the conviction that the supreme necessity is loyalty to the party—on the ground that only a monolithic South Tyrol stands any chance in negotiating with the powers-that-be on the Tiber.

NOWHERE ELSE IN non-Communist Europe is there a minority so hazy about its real situation. This was alarmingly demonstrated at the Milan "trial of the dynamiters." The peasant lads in the dock really believed that the Germans in the South Tyrol had "nothing to lose but their chains," having had that stupid phrase drummed into their ears by their politicians year in and year out. On their remote farms—36 per cent of the South Tyrolese population live on isolated farms—what chance did they have to form a more rational view? Leaflets still circulate with the poem *Es bluten unsere Bruder, nur weil sie Deutsche sind* ("Our brothers' blood flows only because they are Germans"), and the politicians of the People's Party do not pluck up courage to try to stop the mischief.

Their party is admittedly in a difficult situation. Its proclaimed objective of maintaining the German way of life faces it with what is at first sight a practically impossible task. Italy is a nation of 50 million people, and the 250,000 South Tyrolese could easily be accommodated in a middle-sized town. In view of this numerical disproportion of 200 to one, is this small mountain people not bound to be absorbed by its neighbours in the long run? Or, to put it more brutally, can autonomy hope to do more than postpone inevitable national extinction?

"Italian customs men today found a suitcase containing about 28lb. of dynamite and some fuses on the Munich-Rome express as it entered the Alto Adige (South Tyrol) region."

NEWS ITEM

LOOK at the figures, however, suggests a more optimistic view. In spite of war losses, departures under the Himmler option agreement and political pressure, *Deutschtum* or the German way of life between the Brenner and Salerno has succeeded in maintaining itself in the last half century. Its traditional high birthrate (the highest in fertile Italy) has seen it safely through all hazards. Numerically it has succeeded in notably improving its position since 1910 and, in the absence of any repetition of compulsory Italian migration into the area (of which there is no sign either economically or politically), further improvement is in sight. The present proportion of German to Italian speakers among those qualified to vote in the province of Bolzano is 65 to 35, but when the present generation of school-children has grown up it will be 73 to 27. Thus time is on the side of the South Tyrolese (who can actually point with pride to some mountain valleys in which 49 per cent of the inhabitants are under age).

The "South Tyrol problem" is, of course, not solved by the mere fact of the demographic survival of the national group. It is, however, changing in nature. As the economic and social question looms larger the question of "national identity" recedes into the background. In the years ahead the South Tyrolese way of life will be threatened less by the pressure of the Italian population than by the fact that mountain farming is imperilled everywhere.

The social structure of the South Tyrol is grotesquely unhealthy. No less than 60 per cent of its German-speaking population is engaged in agriculture, a record that no one anywhere has any inclination to better. The enthusiast for the agrarian way of life contemplates this situation in alarm, horrified at the fulfilment of his wildest dreams. Here, at last, is a place where there is no trace of the much decried "flight from the land."

If only there were! What, elsewhere, is a cause for concern would be a pure blessing in the province of Bolzano. The North Tyrol shows the path the south should be following in the era of Integration. In 1914 in both parts of the Tyrol, about 60 per cent of the working population were employed in agriculture and 22 per cent in the public services. In the north, where the farms are similarly largely mechanised, only 31 per cent are now employed in agriculture, and this (with the 20 per cent employed in the public services) leaves a surplus

sufficient to man industry, the tourist trade, and the various urban middle-class occupations. Meanwhile, the South Tyrolean urban middle class has declined from 21 to 7 per cent, public-service employees have almost completely vanished (for lack of German-speaking recruits the provincial parliament at Bolzano has had to be staffed more than 50 per cent by Italians), while agriculture still employs 60 per cent.

Can or should it be an aim of aspirants to autonomy to protect a way of life that in the next century will have no right to exist save as a pleasant sentimental memory? Hardly. An "Alpine reserve" would mean an economic (and ultimately a national) death-sentence on the South Tyrolean. The present task must be to guide the country with a minimum of shocks towards new ends—the development of the tourist trade, industry, and the professions.

The tourist trade is especially neglected. Compare, again, the situation with that in the North Tyrol. In 1910 the number of "nights-spent-by-tourists" on either side of the Brenner was about the same, i.e., 385,851 in the north and 355,059 in the south. But in 1965 the corresponding figures were 17,472,600 on the Austrian and a mere 6,247,500 on the Italian side. Nevertheless, the promoters of the tourist trade at Bolzano could easily be in a superior position. They have things to offer that can be sought for elsewhere in vain: a country of 400 castles that looks like a thousand-folded back-cloth for a chivalric drama; a mountain landscape in which the northern winter and the southern summer interpenetrate each other in a breathtaking spring; where in the July heat you can sniff the odour of the fir trees and at the same time a cool breeze from a glazier brings a whiff of last year's snows. The *Törggelen*—which is what the South Tyrolean call the reflective, fastidious, and quietly exhilarating process of tasting the new wine—alone makes an autumn visit worth while. The valleys that wind upwards between glittering 10,000-foot peaks end in ski-tracks of feathery snow. The *Edelweiss* blooms in close proximity to the palm tree, and flowers grow that are to be seen otherwise only in botany books. The wanderer stumbles across ancient culture at every footstep. The sun shines from an almost dark blue sky, and the *Kaminwürzen* (smoked sausages) blend with the local wine. Unlike all other European tourist centres, the South Tyrol has just two seasons a year. It could sell all four—but fails to exploit any of them.

THE SOUTH TYROLESE HAVE HITHERTO ungrudgingly left the industrialisation of the Alto Adige to the Italians. The fact that the prosperity of their province, which is one of the

best-founded in Italy, depends to a large extent on the Bolzano industrial zone seems to have caused the leaders of the German way of life no headaches. Until 1957 the South Tyrol People's Party was uncompromisingly anti-industrial. The economic initiative (and therefore the handing out of jobs) lay almost exclusively in Italian hands, but the People's Party adhered unswervingly to the view that factories meant the "decline of a free peasantry into an industrial proletariat." They may have been influenced by the consideration that a peasantry is easier to control and dissuade from emigration than workers, who are less tied to their native place. But then the politicians of Bolzano suddenly awoke to the painful fact that the lack of industry was driving away the sons of the peasants' sons. They were succumbing to the lure of German industry, going to Austria never to return, or heeding the call of the Italian tourist industry (which needs personnel speaking a foreign language). A great many South Tyrolean now live in Rome (though the statistic can be mentioned only in a whisper at Bolzano). The alarmed party went hurriedly into reverse and began imitating the Swabian doctrine of "*Jedem Dörfle sein Fabrikle*" ("a little factory in every little village"). They did so inconsiderately, rather too hectically. They attracted West German industrialists to the country with the promise of "extremely cheap labour" (which of course did not exist). There was much nonsense and disappointment. But on the whole the thirty or so small and middle-sized factories that have been set up are not doing so badly. A modest beginning has been made.

In the professional field the Italians set the pace almost as much as they do in industry. In the province of Bolzano German is the majority language (65:35), but in the academic field it is the German speakers who are outnumbered by 57 to 43 per cent. In the whole Alto Adige there are only seven South Tyrolean judges, not a single public prosecutor, and only a handful of lawyers. How will this much-



L'ora

lamented "Italianisation of the intellectual class" (which gives thoughtful Italians I talked to little pleasure) ever be checked if the South Tyrolese do not produce an adequate professional class of their own?

It is of course true that the creation of such a class is a difficult task. In 1945 things began, so to speak, from zero. When the Fascist period came to an end only forty-nine qualified German-speaking teachers were left, and hotel servants, salesmen, and shoe-makers had to be called in to fill the breach. Since then at least a well-trained corps of teachers has been built up again. There has also been a steady increase in Tyrolese students in other fields. Whether these young people will tomorrow or the day after be able to compete with the Italians on equal terms remains to be seen. Instead of going to Italian universities, which would equip them for the fray, 75.5 per cent take the easier course of going to German or Austrian universities. "Our national university is Innsbruck," the People's Party proclaims; and more South Tyrolese read for their degrees on the banks of the Inn than in all the Italian universities combined. Then, when the young doctor or engineer comes home, proudly waving his diploma, his defective knowledge of Italian doesn't get him very far.

*"A bomb exploded near Bolzano today as local German-speaking politicians discussed a secret Italian offer to end the dispute over the area's future."*

*"Dr. Silvius Magnago, chairman of the South Tyrolean People's Party, reported to his party executive in Bolzano on talks in Innsbruck about the Italian offer with Austrian politicians, including the Chancellor."*

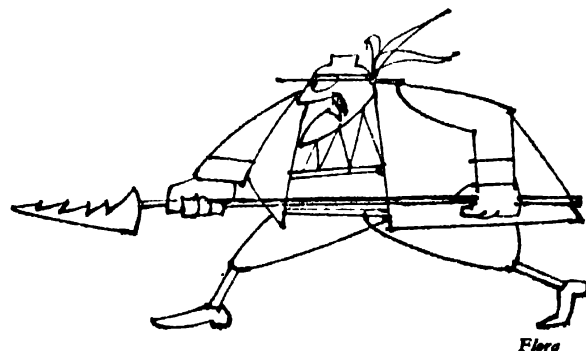
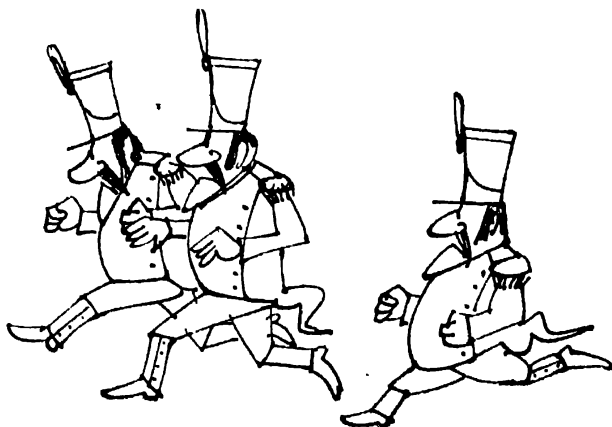
NEWS ITEM

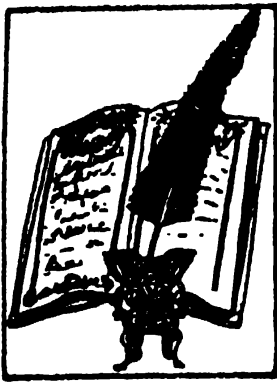
ALL THE SAME, there are certain rudimentary signs of a cautious economic and social reorientation which might lift the South Tyrol out of its stagnation and resignation. If

it wants a future worthy of its great past, a tremendous amount still remains to be done.

Italy's German-speaking minority is now at a crucial turning-point. Nationalism, a relic of the euphoric, pathetic 19th century, is on the wane, and with it the claim the Fascists used to make, that "Italy must be Italian, and 100 per cent Italian, all the way to the God-ordained frontier on the Brenner." The Italians have grown wiser, more tolerant, more realistic. They have realised that their attempt to create a Roman tribe of *Alto Atesini* has failed. They no longer want to Italianise the South Tyrolese, and Italians who go to the area do not strike roots there. On the contrary, a man from Roverto who has spent a life-time working in the Bolzano industrial zone returns home, as a matter of course, on the day of his retirement. I also find that the Italians are "tired" of all the domestic and international trouble the South Tyrol has caused them, and want to be "left in peace," if necessary at the cost of the most far-reaching concessions.

The South Tyrolese should have learnt by now not to squander Italian goodwill by sheer stubbornness. They have amply demonstrated their powers of endurance and loyalty to their way of life. What they now need is tactical adroitness. As it was put to me in Bolzano, "It is up to them now to come out and use their weapons in the open instead of going on fighting with their backs to the wall..." They have been caught in a self-made net of mistrust and psychological non-understanding. The prospects facing them are not bad. They depend on a new South Tyrolean political generation which will understand "the Italian mentality." It must also take to heart a fundamental rule of human cohabitation, namely, that in a forced marriage from which there is no escape one should as far as possible avoid hurling abuse on one's partner and calling on the neighbours for help. Small gestures of appreciation are incomparably more effective than the furious assurance that "however hard you try, I shall never find you anything but revolting..."





## Column

DEBATE, DISCUSSION, controversy are of the essence of academic life, only usually they are conducted in decent obscurity and in muted tones that never penetrate beyond the walls of the universities. Belloc's "remote and ineffectual dons" do not so much howl as mumble for their prey, although if provoked in argument they will sometimes be heard to emit a characteristic high-pitched cry, as of the mewing of sea-birds or the twittering of bats as dusk begins to fall.

Sometimes, however, academic debate emerges into the open and the public is treated to the pleasure of observing that in the heat of argument dons no more observe the rules of rational discourse than any one else, and indeed sometimes achieve a degree of acrimony which seems hardly justified by the subject under discussion. In this, of course, they only reveal the vices of their virtues. The passion for ideas can engender as much heat, and sometimes bitterness, of feeling as any other passion, and is no more subject to the rules of reason than an enthusiasm for blood sports. At the height of the argument, intellectual restraint is apt to fly out of the window, and temperament and personality figure more largely than the cool, dry light of reason. That is what makes it all so enjoyable and instructive.

Something of all this might be deduced from an address delivered by the redoubtable Dr. F. R. Leavis at a conference of teachers of English at the University of Wales and recently published in the *Times Literary Supplement*. Dr. Leavis was expounding the thesis that the study of English, and in particular the practice of literary criticism, now has a "central and basic importance" in the life of our universities and has a unique status in any university curriculum. Its claim to such a position is, in Dr. Leavis' view, based on the proposition that "an English school should conceive its business as being to perform, or to make a serious attempt at performing, the function of criticism in our time"; since the development of the critical faculty, and the creation of an educated public which understands how it should be applied, is what a university pre-eminently exists to promote, the study of English should provide a model and an ideal for the intellectual life of the university as a whole.

At least, this is what I understand Dr. Leavis

to be saying. I hope I am not misinterpreting him, because I find his thesis important and attractive, but I cannot be quite sure, because Dr. Leavis' prose is not always as limpid as one might expect from one who has had so much opportunity of studying the best models. But there can be no doubt at all about the deep feeling and passion which inform his address; they are what has helped to give Dr. Leavis a stronger influence on his pupils, and on English studies as a whole, than any other English teacher of his generation.

I MYSELF HOPE that Dr. Leavis' claim for English studies will be given the attention and respect it deserves when pronounced by so distinguished a scholar; and I believe him when he says that its recognition might provide, or help to provide, an answer to many of the manifest inadequacies of one existing university system. Theology was once queen of the sciences, but since she was dethroned there has been no other discipline to succeed to her vacant place. In such a situation, university education taken as a whole is apt to become an incoherent and unarticulated conjunction of unrelated specialisms; and indeed it is possible that in such a state of affairs one cannot speak of university education as such in any meaningful sense at all. One can only speak of the education of historians, economists, engineers, civil servants, doctors, and what not. But that any particular branch of study can perform the unifying and organising function which Dr. Leavis claims for English, and that English in fact is that particular branch of study, seem to me to be, to say the least, highly debatable propositions, and to admit of a good deal more doubt than Dr. Leavis seems willing to admit.

But in fact Dr. Leavis makes even greater claims for the study of English. In his view it is capable of playing the leading part in the whole of our intellectual life, of performing a creative function which will affect all our intellectual attitudes, of providing an answer to all our intellectual, perhaps even our emotional problems. "Simply, the living principle, the creative and unifying principle of life, made strongly active as I'm suggesting it should and could be, will affect every patch in the total field and work and make all the difference."

Now this is a very large claim indeed, and Dr. Leavis has not really expressed it quite as simply as he seems to think he has; it is not unnatural that there should be those who are not altogether ready to accept it on Dr. Leavis' say-so. Towards such dissenters, or sceptics, Dr. Leavis displays none of that spirit of collaborative enquiry which he so admirably describes in his account of what criticism really means. They

are collectively and comprehensively damned as the representatives of the spirit of Philistinism combined with "enlightenment" which he conceives of as the mortal enemy of everything in which he believes. Perhaps he is right; but those whom he singles out as the embodiment of evil make up such a curious, and on the whole innocuous bunch that a detached observer might well feel inclined to say that they have nothing in common except that they disagree with Dr. Leavis or that Dr. Leavis thinks they do. Lords Robbins, Annan, Balogh, and Snow; Professors David Daiches and J. B. Leishman; Dr. George Steiner; Mr. Cecil King; all fall collectively under the lash of Dr. Leavis' scorn and contempt. Even poor Miss Margaret Drabble is dragged in because Dr. Leavis believes, apparently on the evidence of a publisher's blurb, that she committed the mortal sin of taking a first in the English Tripos without working very hard for it.

Dr. Leavis' condemnation of this curiously associated collective embodiment of *der Geist der stets verneint*, of the enemies of the creative spirit, is couched in terms of such dismissive scorn that one is left with no very clear idea of why it is deserved; after all, how does poor Lord Balogh come into it? One has the feeling that some at least of Dr. Leavis' victims would agree with many of the excellent things he has to say about university education, but that if they did so they would only enrage him further. Indeed, one's strongest feeling at the end of Dr. Leavis' address is that, if he himself represents the virtues which he claims for the study of English, somewhere along the line something has gone gravely wrong with them.

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THERE IS SUCH an odour of *odium theologicum* in Dr. Leavis' address that one wonders if he can seriously think it compatible with his claims for the study of English as a source of sweetness and light amid our present discontents. But perhaps an even more extraordinary exhibition of the kind of intellectual schizophrenia which sometimes affects the brightest academic spirits is to be found in some recent pronouncements of a distinguished American scholar, Noam Chomsky.

Professor Chomsky holds the chair of modern languages and linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and he is, by common consent, one of the most outstanding intellects which has ever devoted itself to this abstruse field of study. But one does not have to take Professor Chomsky's intellectual merits on credit. One is, once again, indebted to the *Times Literary Supplement* for making available the

first of the six John Locke lectures which Professor Chomsky recently delivered at Oxford. Even as strictly unqualified a person as myself could hardly read it without pleasure and admiration. Professor Chomsky discussed language in terms of concepts which have so high a degree of abstraction and sophistication as to be almost unintelligible to a layman; but he also does so with a lucidity, and a power of sustained argument which, to me at least, make the lecture a model of exposition.

Moreover, his discussion of what it means to know a language leads him into the fields which have a not merely academic importance; indeed they could, at the present time, have the most direct and practical bearing on the lives of each one of us. For a large part of his lecture is devoted to demonstrating (as it seems to me, conclusively) that human, as opposed to animal, language, cannot be explained in terms of behaviourist psychology; and since the activities of behaviourist psychologists are something which everyone at the present time should regard with alarm and suspicion, it is important to have so large a chink in their armour so satisfactorily exposed.

In particular, Professor Chomsky devotes himself (after a 'side-swipe at B. F. Skinner) to an examination of the views on language of Professor Quine of Harvard, one of the most formidable of modern philosophers and logicians. His attack on Quine's position seems to me devastating, and all the more so because it is conducted with a restraint, a respect for Quine's intellectual eminence, and a kind of elegant destructiveness which make it a model of what intellectual controversy should be; in this respect, Professor Chomsky is the very opposite of Dr. Leavis.

BUT PROFESSOR CHOMSKY is not only a brilliantly equipped student of language and linguistics; he is also a student of politics, and as such has in recent years made himself a hero of the extreme Left in the United States, and in particular of rebellious American university students. His position in these matters is as crude and simple as his attitude to linguistics is refined and sophisticated; it is that American foreign policy is wholly evil, and necessarily so, because it is the direct reflection of a society which is also absolutely evil, so evil indeed that if the United States was capable of having a conscience it would refuse to have a foreign policy at all.

So neat and simple a solution of the vast, complicated and tenebrous issues involved in American policy and the condition of American society today might well arouse the suspicions of even the most naïve student of them. And

perhaps even Professor Chomsky may sometimes wonder whether it can be true; perhaps that is why he has to assert it with such violence. Perhaps also that is why he feels the need to buttress his views with a display of false scholarship of which he would feel bitterly ashamed in his own specialist field of study. His book *American Power and the New Mandarins* has a wealth of documentation which at first sight is extremely impressive; the sheer weight of it makes one feel that the argument it supports can hardly fail to be true. Yet any intelligent school-boy could teach Professor Chomsky that, as he perfectly well knows for himself in his own field of study, the mere repetition and accumulation of dubious sources in no way improves the status of any single one of them, or all of them taken together, especially when they are chosen, like Professor Chomsky's, with so selective an eye that anything which seems to conflict with them is rigidly excluded. Professor Chomsky's selection of sources indeed is so tendentious that at times it seems to verge on falsification. Professor Schlesinger took the trouble to verify three statements of President Truman's, quoted by Professor Chomsky, which seemed to him slightly improbable; one proved to be an invention of Professor Chomsky's and the other two derived at third hand from a writer who had placed his own interpretation on what Truman had actually said.

How can one explain the fact that a mind as accurate, delicate and scrupulous as Professor Chomsky's in one field of thought should become so clumsy, bungling and crude when applied in another? It is as if Professor Chomsky had not one mind but two, wholly unrelated to one another, like a surgeon who carries in one hand a scalpel and in the other a bludgeon, and when tired of using the one for its own delicate task proceeds to use the other to batter his patients' brains out. The truth I suppose is that Professor Chomsky has arrived at his conclusions about American policy not by any rational process of thought but by some unique act of intuition which has revealed to him the full horror of the evil that men do, a vision of hell as exemplified by the contemporary United States.

He speaks not as a student of politics but as a prophet who has seen the awful implications of original sin and like so many other prophets before him would not hesitate to crucify mankind for the rightness of his convictions.

THIS DOES NOT MEAN, of course, though on the whole it makes it improbable, that Professor Chomsky is wrong in his view of American policy. There is no reason why bad arguments, or bad evidence, might not lead to correct conclusions. But it does mean that when Professor Chomsky talks about Viet Nam or the Korean War we have left the sphere of rational discourse and, if we are to pay any attention to him at all, it must be because of a superior moral intuition which is denied to those who disagree with him. And it also means, I think, that by the methods he uses to make his insight manifest to the world, he helps not to clarify but only to obscure still further the issues to which he devotes, not his mind, which is an admirable instrument, but his emotions, which seem to me uncommonly unpleasant ones; for after all why should one deny oneself the same power of intuition which Professor Chomsky so liberally claims for himself?

I do not write such words with any pleasure. I dislike intensely the state of moral hysteria into which Professor Chomsky whips himself, and regret that so fine a mind should be guilty of such crudities; just as I regret it when Bertrand Russell declares the satisfaction it would give him to see the bodies of his political antagonists torn to pieces by sharks. But in such infirmities of noble minds we should, I think, read a warning. At a time when the influence of the academic interest on public affairs has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished, we should remember that academics are no more immune to the forces of irrationality than the rest of us. For that reason, when academics take to the public forum we should observe their performances with particular attention. When men become, as Dr. Leach would say, like gods, they are apt to behave like monsters.

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# THEATRE

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## Rites at the Round House

By John Weightman

ACCORDING TO AN ARTICLE I read somewhere recently, Julian Beck's *Living Theatre* would now appear out-of-date in America, where the liveliest minds have progressed to the Theatre of Total Copulation and Public Masturbation. It is very interesting to see how the drama, which presumably emerged as a simulated ceremony from real ceremony, is straining so hard to return to the religious immediacy of its origins. One of the great problems in the modern industrialised world is that our official ceremonies lack conviction; even the investiture of the Prince of Wales, which in one sense has been a public relations triumph, has at the same time been written about and commented upon, as if it were an elaborate non-event. But since official ceremonies are obviously decadent, and religious seriousness has largely deserted the churches, there has been—and there is—a persistent attempt to de-commercialise the theatre and turn it into total rite or substitute church. I would say that the impulse which makes people want to copulate or masturbate publicly and ceremoniously, or to watch such spectacles, is fundamentally religious. They want experiences which they feel to be genuine to assume a social and cosmic significance. In some ancient tribes, the king had, at intervals, to demonstrate the principle of potency by covering a mare in full view of his assembled people. It will be some time, no doubt, before the President of the United States is required to do this, but meanwhile a pop-singer or a group of actors can turn a theatrical occasion into a real priapic holy-day. The next step, logically, should be the Theatre of Genuine Bloody Sacrifice and Authentic Hara-Kiri. It was perhaps, after all, a mistake to abolish public executions, whippings and scourgings, the pillory and the stocks; perhaps they were necessary as a permanent, real-life Theatre of Cruelty. It was certainly a mistake to abolish them while hoping to keep alive the symbol of the Cross. Needless to say,

Christianity itself has a most elaborate sado-masochistic structure, possibly the most perfect in existence, but for a variety of reasons it has gone dead on us and the most we can expect is that it will be rediscovered in the 21st century by the Chinese or Lunar *avant garde*.

MR. JULIAN BECK, as I understand him from his television interviews and the performance of *Frankenstein* I saw at the Round House, is squarely in the middle of the theatrico-revivalist tradition, slightly senior to, and more intense than, Mr. Peter Brook, slightly junior to, and much more intense than M. Jean-Louis Barrault. He is definitely not yet *passé* in London, because the Round House, normally the Albert Hall of the way-out, was filled with a very fashionable and intellectual audience of pop-personalities, actors, and writers, most of them in bright plumage and as pretty as if they had just stepped out of a Persian miniature.

Facing the hemisphere which they decorated so gaily and filled with the marvellous buzz of up-to-the-minute chatter was a three-tier construction in scaffolding, against a dull grey backcloth; and, on the floor beneath, the Living Theatre company, all hirsute, threadbare, and dedicated, squatting in the Oriental posture of meditation with their *guru*, Mr. Beck. Mr. Beck's physique is, as the French say, a whole programme in itself. I always admire bald men who make a go of it, and Mr. Beck combines baldness with a fringe of long hair and the cadaverous, unsmiling countenance of a relentless, medieval monk. Is he consciously trying to resemble the last photographs of Antonin Artaud, I wondered, or has a similar passion produced a similar pattern of skin, bone, and eyes? At any rate, here was a common modern situation: the successful, the wealthy, and the worldly about to watch a performance by the devoted, the self-sacrificing, the utterly convinced. It was, in fact, not unlike Mass in a fashionable Parisian church.



Mr. Beck seems to me to derive directly from two French sources. His concept of the company as an egalitarian guild, with everyone doing a bit of everything and all working together in a spirit of austerity, comes from Jacques Copeau. This is acting as a way of life or spiritual travelling circus. In the intervals, the performers did not disappear but set about tinkering with their scaffolding in preparation for the next episode, just like the people on the roundabouts and aerial wheels at the Hampstead Fair. Mr. Beck moved about with the rest, hieratically adjusting an electric bulb or majestically tightening a screw. Then, the spirit of the performance derives from Artaud, because the action is not conceived at all as a play in the sense that has been traditional since the 16th century but as a sequence of theatrical images in which bodily movements, inarticulate noises, and rhythmical patterns of sound are much more important than the spoken word; it is symphonic ritual rather than cathartic statement. It is also Artaud-like in that the emphasis is on extreme situations and unbearable suffering. Although I heard Mr. Beck talk a lot about love, one cannot imagine him, any more than Artaud, conveying a sense of lyrical tenderness or spiritual happiness. He comes to flay and to scourge, to tell us we are damned if we do not change, to rub our noses in the rottenness of civilisation. He is a hell-fire preacher.

ABOUT *Frankenstein*, let me say at once that it is a lot more impressive than I had supposed from the fragments given on television. As one might expect from the title, it is a kind of panoramic vision of human history, superior in theatrical impact to that strangely overrated play by Thornton Wilder, *The Skin of Our Teeth*, which was revived last year at Chichester, and reminiscent in tone of William Winwood Read's *The Martyrdom of Man*. The message is, apparently, that man has recreated himself as a monster, although it is not quite clear whether this process began a long time ago, or whether it has been particularly acute since the advent of the capitalist and scientific phase of Western civilisation. Possibly the latter implication is taken for granted, but I feel that the ambiguity is regrettable.

In the last resort, I think, we have the choice between only two philosophies of life: the tragic view and the tragico-progressive view. The latter admits the idea of progress as a good working hypothesis, while at the same time recognising that tragedy will keep breaking in. I am not sure that Mr. Beck has thought the matter through to its intellectual foundations.

Like so many indignant moralists, he appears to assume that "they" (i.e., various groups or individuals) are responsible for the evil in the world, and that we should rise up and fight them because the task is obvious. "How can we end human suffering?", he cries just after the beginning of the performance. The answer obviously is that, in the absolute, we cannot, and the question is profoundly naïve. We can only mitigate human suffering here and there, and hope that the improvements will not cause a new evil. On any showing, human beings are only partly responsible for evil, and it is no use getting annoyed with them beyond a certain point, as if they had created themselves and the universe. Artaud—at least if I have grasped his meaning—had a less political view than Mr. Beck; he felt that life was permanently and inherently tragic, and he wanted to evolve a ritual that would give mystic expression to the tragedy. It would not have occurred to him, as it has done to Mr. Beck, to give any theatrical performance the programmatic title of *Paradise Now*. I suspect that Mr. Beck wants to be as intense as Artaud, and at bottom he is perhaps just as tragic, but he has overlaid the tragedy with a partly unassimilated politicism.

*FRANKENSTEIN* opens with the company meditating for three minutes, with the proclaimed object of inducing the levitation of the actress in the middle of the group, whose name, according to the programme, is Mary Mary. Not surprisingly, she is contrary and fails to levitate, whereupon bedlam breaks loose; half the company sets about torturing and killing the other half. Mary Mary is caught in a net and carried off behind a transparent screen, where, in beautiful shadow outline, Mr. Beck-Frankenstein performs nameless operations on her luscious body. The only effect of this on me, alas, was to inspire sadistic nostalgia. What a pity it is, I suddenly realised, that we cannot go about the streets with a net, catching pretty, long-legged creatures as if they were butterflies, and taking them covetously home for private games. But this, I suppose, was a subjective irrelevance; we are no doubt meant to understand that, levitation not having taken place, i.e., no relationship with the transcendent having been established, humanity tears itself apart.

The dead are used by Dr. Frankenstein, who at this stage appears to be a demonic figure, to create a new artificial and horrible creature. The body of the monster is put together, part by part, while the company marches and counter-marches along the different levels of the scaffolding, imitating the rhythm of industrial

society and chanting fragments of various creeds and psychologies. All this is jolly good teamwork, but the intellectual content is hardly equal to the vigour of movement.

What importance have we to attach to the various slogans? Are they sincere or derisory? Is the guying of the heart-transplant operation meant to suggest that science is creating horrors? But any forward-looking mind is bound to approve of science when it is used for good, as in medicine. I was puzzled. However, in the end, the monster is complete on the operating table, while at the same time the company, hanging on the scaffolding like a swarm of bees, form the silhouette of a gangling figure with two red eyes, half man half dinosaur. Very effective, in a Grand Guignol way.

I thought Act II contained the most telling theatrical image. A tube of electric lights, set against the scaffolding, formed an enormous human head in profile—the head of the creature on whom Frankenstein was still working at the operating table. (The White actor representing the creature had now been replaced by a Negro, but I couldn't guess the significance, if any, of the change.) While Frankenstein carried on his experiments, the company moved up and down inside the head, over the three levels of the scaffolding, like a visual translation of Descartes' animal spirits circulating from the body to the brain. As the half-naked men and women slithered up and down the poles like aesthetic monkeys, they formed many beautiful patterns and groupings, which were, in fact, old-fashioned *tableaux vivants* put to a new symbolic use. It was not all successful; some episodes taken from Greek myth were like clumsy charades—and in any case, why should an artificial creature relive Greek myth?—but the representations of sleep and dreaming were very fine. At this point, I think, Mr. Beck had forgotten that the creature was an artificial

monster and was just treating him as an incarnation of Everyman.

Act III turned the scaffolding into a prison and Dr. Frankenstein, surprisingly enough, into a hero. Half the company, skulking in the back of the auditorium, was arrested by the other half, finger-printed and encaged, with much barking and blowing of whistles. Each prisoner gibbered and writhed in his cell, presumably to convey the anguish of man in a totalitarian society. However, good Dr. Frankenstein instigated a revolt, the warders were knocked unconscious, and the rebellious prisoners set fire to their jail, which was soon enveloped in smoke. As the murk cleared, the company could be seen clinging to the girders once more, in the shape of the gangling monster with two red eyes. The phoenix had risen again from the flames, but perhaps we were meant to think that he is no more assured of survival than the dinosaur was.

THAT IS THE MOST I can make of the performance. As usual, in my niggling way I have looked for a meaning and have found conflicting ambiguities. Who is Dr. Frankenstein: the devil, the perverse instinct in man, or the active impulse which may create or destroy? Is the creation of the artificial man good or bad? As one doesn't know, the piece has little coherence. Act III, a simple affair of goodies and baddies, has hardly any connection with Acts I and II, and all three have internal contradictions. I am left with the memory of one or two independently impressive moments, of an athletic company with a good rhythm producing great splodges of emotion not attached to anything in particular. They are convinced, or appear to be; Mr. Beck is their high-priest; but what, in the last resort is the precise content of their religion? Perhaps just emotion for emotion's sake.

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# POETRY

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## A Razor Soaked in Gloomy Scent

*On the Greatness of Hagiwara Sakutarō—By GRAEME WILSON*

IT IS NOT surprising that the poetry of I Hagiwara Sakutarō is little known in the English-speaking world, because even in Japan the importance of his work is still inadequately recognised. Nearly all Japanese critiques of post-Meiji poetry acknowledge Hagiwara as one of the best (if not, indeed, the very best) of modern Japanese poets; but almost all the critics, having briefly made some such admission, turn their backs on him and give their real attention to poets patently less talented, painfully more diffuse, and far less influential. Why? Perhaps the reason is that Hagiwara, for all his brilliance, seems somehow to switch on darkness, to radiate black luminance. He is an occulting, rather than a flashing, light; but he remains nevertheless a light of the first importance.

He was born on 1 November 1886 at Maebashi, a provincial town near Tokyo where his father was a successful doctor, first in government service and later in private practice. The family was typical of the new Japanese middle class deliberately created by the policy-makers of the Meiji régime, and Hagiwara's home environment was characterised by its openness to modern influences: electric light, the magic lantern, ping-pong, western chairs and tables, summer holidays at the seaside, western playing-cards, the piano, the guitar, the mouth-organ. The eldest of six children, he was a sickly and hence a spoilt child, remaining his mother's lifelong darling. A bad student, his failure to win the academic distinction of which he was obviously capable showed a lazy man's unwillingness as well as a sick man's inability to concentrate. He neither went to a university nor

ever seriously studied to develop his natural talent for music. Indeed, modern critics, conscious of his proven genius, find themselves in the embarrassing position of not knowing whether some of the curious words in his poetry are deliberate coinings or uneducated mistakes.

On leaving school, he drifted into a vaguely bohemian life and spent the years 1910–1913 oscillating between Maebashi and Tokyo, reading, learning to play the mandolin, listening to opera, attending foreign plays, reviewing Kabuki performances, writing poetry. His father was very disappointed in him, while the respectable people of Maebashi loudly disapproved of him. His poetry is full of acid and revengeful references to his native place and its inhabitants.

His early poetry is all apprentice stuff in the traditional *tanka* form of five lines of 5:7:5:7:7 syllables. Nevertheless, by 1913 he had won some reputation as a new poet in the traditional mode, and had already decided to devote his life to literature. He formed useful friendships in the literary world; especially with the well-established poets Yosano Akiko (1878–1942) and Kitahara Hakushū (1885–1942), and with two other excellent rising poets, Murō Saisei (1889–1962) and Yamamura Bochō (1884–1924). Then, suddenly, in 1913, he began writing those astonishing and essentially modern poems on which his real and lasting reputation rests. His first book, *Tsuki ni Hoeru* (*Barking at the Moon*) appeared in 1917. It is still generally considered to be his most characteristic work and it made a great impression as soon as it was published. It also involved Hagiwara in a brush

with the Imperial Censor, who held that two of the poems (*Person Who Loves Love* and *Ai Ren*) would corrupt the young.

Hagiwara was recognised at once as a leading contemporary writer, and devoted the rest of his life to producing a long stream of books. These included six volumes of poetry, several of criticism, two major studies of poetic theory, a novel, an extremely influential study of Buson, and a flood of prose-poems, aphorisms, essays, articles, radio scripts and miscellaneous writings. Throughout, he depended largely on his father for financial support.

In 1919 he married Ueda Ineko, but, though two daughters were born, the marriage was a failure and ended in 1929. A second marriage in 1938 to Ōya Mitsuko proved equally luckless, and she left him after eighteen months. The loneliness, nihilism, and desperation of his later life is painfully reflected in his poems, and the posthumous account of him written by his elder daughter Yōko paints a poignant picture of the ageing poet, fascinated by stage-magic and simple conjuring tricks, drifting into alienation and persistent drunkenness. Kitahara Hakushū, in his introduction to *Barking at the Moon*, likened the quality in Hagiwara's early poetry to that of a "razor soaked in gloomy scent," to the "flash of a razor in a bowl of cool mercury." This razor-edge was never seriously blunted, but its scent soured into the smell of stale beer; and Murō, in his poem on Hagiwara's death, significantly described the realities of life as it continued in the world as "for you mere *saké* spilt along the bar." Hagiwara himself explained his particular liking for beer as conducive to drawn-out argument about poetry in the course of a slow progression into incoherence. Miyoshi Tatsuji, who, from Hagiwara's death to his own in 1964, was Japan's best poet, has described long, fascinating discussions with Hagiwara as he sat drinking steadily in his favourite corner of his favourite beer-hall in Shinjuku; but it is Hagiwara, and Hagiwara only, whom Miyoshi recognised as master. The poet's lonely life was lightened by a variety of new literary friendships; and the deepest (that with Miyoshi) persisted until Hagiwara's death of pneumonia on 18 May 1942, surviving even a quarrel over Miyoshi's frank confession of his dislike of Hagiwara's last book of poems (*The Ice Land*, of 1934).

HAGIWARA BEGAN WRITING during that critical period in the history of Japanese literature when Western influences, almost overwhelming in the Meiji Era (1868-1912), were at last being so successfully assimilated as to permit the re-growth of that essentially Japanese spirit which

characterised the succeeding Taisho Era (1912-1926). By 1910 the seeds dropped from foreign flowers (not all of them *Fleurs du Mal*) had taken a good hold, and *wakon yōsai*, the Meiji slogan that stressed the need to meld "Western learning and the Japanese spirit," was a living inspiration. Hagiwara's universality derives directly from this inspiration.

It is still said that the artist's function is to hold a mirror up to nature. The time when that remark was true, if ever such a time there was, is now long past. The artist's function is (and has, I fancy, always been) to hold up mirrors that transmit not the photographer's literal reality but the artist's individual, even cracked, reflection of the universe. His function in the world is not to copy it but to create unreasonable facsimiles thereof. For artists, especially lyric poets such as Hagiwara, are not concerned with truths verifiable by photographs, by the due processes of the law or by the disciplines of formal logic. They have those reasons reason does not know. Hagiwara was once asked to explain the meaning of an early poem. He replied by asking if his questioner considered the nightingale's song beautiful. On receiving the inevitable affirmative, he then asked what that bird-song meant. . . . For Hagiwara holds no mirror, cracked or commonplace, up to nature: mirrors need light. Instead, he turns a radar on to nature's hitherto unpenetrated darknesses, feeling out shapes invisible. The resultant images, shining, golden or greeny-silver, often indeed distorted, may, to a photographer's eye, seem odd; but they are authentic versions, visions even, of the truth. For Hagiwara was a native of that strange world where Dylan Thomas' question ("Isn't life a terrible thing, thank God?") really needs no answer. And of that world his poems are a terrible, but a beautiful, reporting.

HIS EARLIEST TRULY MODERN POEMS, of which the first examples appeared in magazines during 1913, show traces of the influence of Baudelaire and the French Symbolists. He has, in fact, been called "the Japanese Baudelaire" but, though there are obvious resemblances in their attitudes, Hagiwara's poetry (as distinct from his prose) contains none of the intellectualism of his predecessor. Similarly, those poems where he shows most resemblance to Rimbaud are in the lighter lyrical field; and it is interesting to compare Hagiwara's "Elegant Appetite" with Rimbaud's "Au Cabaret-Vert," the poem which Ezra Pound considered Rimbaud's best. Though Hagiwara's work rings with a certain natural pessimism and despair (reflections of ill-health, ill nerves and plain ill-luck), its tone was deepened by study of Nietzsche, Bergson

and Schopenhauer. Not only his first book but also his middle-period poetry (notably the poems in *To Dream of a Butterfly* of 1923 and *Blue Cat* of the same year) exhibit that pure but desperate lyricism which German critics have called "the Keats sickness." These poems do not argue: they sing.

As the poet aged, his poetry began to lose its lyrical purity and, though it never sank to the level of logical argument, it did begin to organise its imagery into a sort of argument by visual analogy. At the same time he reverted to a more frequent use of the classical Japanese literary vocabulary (a vocabulary or, to be more precise, a syllabary derived from the Chinese), and his poems acquired a clanging rather than a singing quality. These stylistic changes, of which "Late Autumn" is a good example, have been praised as marking Hagiwara's late development towards a more masculine manner. Such may indeed have been the poet's own intention, but I share Miyoshi's view that the change was a retrogression. I would not go so far as to echo his comment—the one that so annoyed Hagiwara—"Even the powerful bow weakens in the end"—but there can be no doubt that the later poetry contains intellectual elements which adulterate, if they do not actually spoil, his earlier pure lyricism. His prose writings demonstrate his reasoned (and, I think, rightly reasoned) antipathy to the styles of political poetry which characterised the schools of the 1930s in most parts of the world; but so far as those poets were poets and not political theorists or would-be politicians, Hagiwara shared their ever-deepening sense of anger, sadness and despair. Some of his later poems such as "Useless Book" and "What I Don't Have Is Everything" are almost querulous. He became eventually so bankrupt of all hope that, in Auden's terrifying words (which might well have been his own), he moved towards the ultimate silence of death,

"Saying Alas  
To less and less."

THE REASONS for Hagiwara's importance in the history of modern Japanese literature (and, indeed, in the whole history of Japanese literature) may be summarised under the following six headings: his use of new forms, his use of new language, his escape from traditional metric rhythms, his entirely personal music, his astonishing personal vision, and his unprecedented achievement of sustained lyricism.

The earliest collection of Japanese poetry (the *Manyōshū* of 759) consists largely of *tanka*, but it also contains many poems in the longer forms

of the *chōka* and *sedōka*. However, by the time that Ki no Tsurayuki wrote his catalytic preface to the *Kokinshū* (the First Imperial Anthology of 905), the Japanese poetic tradition had already begun to crystallise into a tradition of pure lyricism. "Poetry," wrote Tsurayuki, "has its seeds in man's heart"; and this view of poetry as lyricism necessitating no breadth of learning in the lyricist has remained the main strand of the Japanese poetic tradition. Such a tradition demands precisely that intensity of feeling which is usually most tellingly expressed in short forms; and for this reason the *chōka* and *sedōka* withered away. Though at various times in the subsequent development of Japanese poetry, poets struggled for the freedom of longer forms such as the *imayō*, *kouta*, *dodoitsu* and *jōruri*, the five-line *tanka* remained the normal mode of expression. Some measure of freedom appeared to be offered by the development of linked verse (*renga*) in which often different poets would compose successive three-line and two-line groups: but, in the event, this breaking of the *tanka* into a three-line upper hemistich (*kami no ku*) of 5:7:5 syllables and a two-line lower hemistich (*shimo no ku*) of 7:7 syllables merely resulted in a yet greater compression of Japanese poetic form. For the upper hemistich embarked on an independent development to become that flower of Edo poetry, now shrivelled to a tourist's gaud, the three-line *haiku*. Thus, when contact was re-established with the outside world in 1868, the main tradition of Japanese poetry was rigidly confined within the narrow courses of the *tanka* and the *haiku*. The notion of poetry as a vehicle for intellectual thought, the concept of the poetry of social protest, the didactic element in Chinese poetry—all these had ended with Yamanoue no Okura (660–733).

THE FIRST RESULT in poetry of the Meiji re-opening of windows on the West was the appearance in 1882 of *Shintaishi* (*New Style Poetry*), a collection of translations of early 19th-century English poems edited by three Professors (significantly of philosophy, botany and sociology) at the University of Tokyo. The preface sharply attacked the cramping brevity of traditional forms ("How can a consecutive thought be expressed in such tight forms"); and three further collections (Shimazaki Tōson's *Seedlings* in 1887, Mori Ogai's *Semblances* in 1889 and Ueda Bin's *Sound of the Tide* in 1905) pursued the same line of attack but broadened the scope of European impact to include French, German and Italian influences. Nevertheless, the main stream of Japanese poetry continued to flow in the form of *tanka* (notably in the work of Yosano Akiko) and Hagiwara him-

## Person Who Loves Love

With crimsoned lips I kissed the trunk  
 Of the new white birch . . .  
 Yet even if I were a man of spunk,  
 No breasts would lurch  
 Like rubber balls on my chest, and my  
 Slack skin would smell  
 Of no fine powder. But what am I  
 To be wishing me well?  
 A man in whom the sap ran dry,  
 A sherd, a shell.

But here, on this fragrant summer's day,  
 In a sparkling grove's  
 Clearing, I put myself away  
 And pull on gloves,  
 Gloves that over my whole hand slip  
 Like a sky sky-blue,  
 And a thing like a corset round my hip  
 I wrap on too,  
 And I fix my hair with a bobby-clip  
 As the young girls do.

I dust my neck with a sort of chalk  
 And I pat my hair,  
 Then, with that half-coquettish walk  
 And mincing air  
 Which girls affect, I tilt my head . . .  
 O pity me,  
 As I kiss the trunk of the new white birch,  
 As I bend the knee,  
 As I cling, lips painted rosely red,  
 To that white tall tree.

## Home

Sitting in the old house, speaking  
 In silence to each other,  
 With no words said whatever  
 That either might regret;  
 Not sworn or open foes,  
 Not even quittance-seeking  
 Collectors of unpaid debt.

"Look, I'm your wife. I shall never,  
 Not though I die, depart."

The eyes, ill-tempered, glaring  
 Over a daggered nose  
 Stare from a vengeful heart  
 And, as our glances cross,  
 Neat malice nicks my nape.  
 Sitting in the old house, staring  
 At nothing; at a loss  
 How to escape, to escape.

## Barking at the Moon

On the rotting wharf that pilfering cur,  
 Pale yapping waif of a wharfinger,  
 Barks at the moon:  
 The lonely at the lonelier.

O listen hard. By the wharf's stone wall  
 Where in the dark the water curls  
 To lap at land's ramshackledom,  
 There gloomy voices rise and fall,  
 Gloomy voices of yellow girls  
 Sing singing of kingdoms come.

Why must I hear such singing; why  
 Must I walk so ware of the world gone wry;  
 And why, pale dog,  
 Unhappy dog, am I always I?

## Rotten Clam

Over the naked poll  
 Of this dead mollusc stuck  
 Half-buried in the sand,  
 Its licking tongue a-loll,  
 Brine, gravel and sea-muck  
 Flow grating to and fro,  
 Flow without south or sound  
 As dreams to silence flow,  
 Slow-sluicingly.

Flickered through that dumb flux  
 The tongue's thin gabble glows  
 Red from the gravelly frot;  
 And when sad evening sucks  
 The sea down to expose  
 Wan flats where sadness broods,  
 From entrails on the rot  
 The putrid breath protrudes,  
 Flickeringly.

self wrote hundreds of early poems in that form; of these the first five appeared in his school magazine in 1902 and the last group (influenced by Kitahara's work in that mode) in 1913. So, when in 1913 Hagiwara began to write poems in all manner of irregular and typically "modern" forms, he was by no means the first to abandon traditional Japanese practice; but he was undoubtedly the first Japanese poet successfully to exploit the innovations of form derived from Western examples for the expression of traditional Japanese lyricism. It is perhaps worth noting here that Hagiwara did not at any time follow Western example into those striking departures from the Japanese lyric tradition which, picking up the didactic tradition where Okura had left it in the 8th century, eventually developed into modern Japanese proletarian poetry and those contemporary schools which, though named after Eliot's early lyrics, in fact derive from his later (and very un-Japanese) "thinking poetry."

Similarly, though Buson (1716-1783) had tentatively experimented with the use of the spoken colloquial language (*kōgotai*), it was not until the *Shintaishi* movement was well developed that any serious attempt was made to break away from the literary language (*bungotai*) derived from Chinese models in which *tanka* and *haiku* were traditionally written. The three Tokyo Professors expressed in their preface "regret that poetry has not hitherto been written in the colloquial language," but the language used to express the subsequent flow of imitations of European poets did little to assuage that sorrow. It was almost certainly Murō Saisei who first realised completely that the future of Japanese poetry lay in the use of *kōgotai* but, especially after Murō turned to the writing of novels, it was left for Hagiwara to exploit that realisation and so to become the true father of modern Japanese poetry. He exploited the rich resources of the colloquial right down to the darker levels of the vernacular; and his claim that "all new poetic styles issued from this book" (*Barking at the Moon*) is, I think, a fair one.

Though the *Manyōshū* contained poems with lines of a notably irregular syllable-count, all subsequent Japanese poetry was constructed from patterns of lines of five and seven syllables; the so-called seven-five metric rhythm (*shichi go chō*). The words of the Japanese language are so built up from unaccented syllables almost all ending in vowels that rhyme has never been used in its poetry. (In parenthesis, one might remark that one of the further peculiarities of Hagiwara's earliest "modern" poems is that some of them do, in fact, appear to rhyme.) However, this basic

structure of the language has resulted in a prosody very closely linked to a syllable-count, and long experience has confirmed the tradition that the *shichi go chō* is the rhythm most natural to the language. None of the poets of the *Shintaishi* movement, despite their attacks on traditional form and traditional language, made any attempt to break away from this traditional metric rhythm. The first real efforts in that direction were made by Kawaji Ryūkō in his volume of poems *Hakidame* (*Rubbish Heap*) published in 1908. But again, though Hagiwara was not the pioneer, he was the first Japanese poet since Manyō times successfully to exploit rhythms other than the *shichi go chō*.

IT MAY WELL BE that Hagiwara's success in advancing Ryūkō's pioneering work was a result of his almost professional knowledge of music. He was obsessed by music all his life. As a small boy he brought home a violin for the school holidays. Although in 1910 he wrote to one of his class-mates: "I have three possibilities: a merchant, a medical student, a suicide by pistol," only his somewhat childish (he was then twenty-four) love of dramatising his feelings of being misunderstood could have led him to omit the real possibility that he would become a musician. In 1911 he spent four months learning the mandolin under an Italian teacher, and prepared—in his usual ineffective way—for the entrance examination to the Ueno Music School. In 1912 he was studying the guitar in Tokyo, and as late as 1914 he was actually teaching the mandolin in a small Western-style music-school recently established in Maebashi. He organised, conducted and played publicly in musical groups. He published criticism both of Western music and of the decline of the *samisen*, and in later life even wrote some minor compositions of his own. Though Beethoven was his favourite composer and though Japanese critics have emphasised the symphonic structure of his middle-period poetry (notably that in *Blue Cat*), his poems reveal an essentially melodic interest.

In this connection it is worth suggesting that the poetry of Hagiwara and the poetry of Federico Garcia Lorca (his almost exact Spanish contemporary) merit comparative study. It has been acutely remarked that, whereas Lorca was obsessed with the terror of envisaged horrors, Hagiwara was transfixed in lasting horror of terrors long arrived. The two poets shared an absorption in greenness ("Here," wrote Hagiwara, "is a little flute whose music is pure green"; "Green, how I love you, green," wrote Lorca). They shared a feeling for loneliness, for rivered landscapes, moonlight and horizons bounded by the bark-

## Useless Book

I saw a man of pallidness  
Selling books in the street:  
I heard him crying like a fighting cock  
With his ribs all thin.

I once was a man of uselessness.  
'This was a useless book.  
It should be sold to someone  
For one hundredth of a yen.

On a cold day close to winter,  
Wearing a lined kimono,  
The destitution of my lack of being  
Has turned, inside me, sour.

How, shedding tears and feeling  
In these old yellowish pages  
Passion for what impassioned me  
Once, o how should I dare  
So to keep talking of my lonely life?

My understanding empties:  
All that I have is nothing:  
There's nothing really there.

What should be bought should be bought.

Though the pedestrians run  
And, as they scatter, wind  
Whips up its scrolls of sand,  
My ancient lines of thought,  
All that I felt and thought,  
Writhe into grief again.

Look,  
'This is a useless book  
And should be sold to someone  
For one hundredth of one yen.

## Hunting Fireflies

One from the nape of my beloved sister,  
One from a window of the loony-bin,  
One from the wound in Christ's bare foot,  
One from a crevice in the tomb of kin,  
One from the dead heart of a murderer,  
One from a fish-spine's shining splay  
And one from my own polished hand:  
Fire from a world five worlds away.

## Death of an Alcoholic

From the dead body of the alcoholic  
Lying on its back—slack mouth, sharp nose—  
Around the area of the dead white stomach  
Something unimaginable flows.

With blood congealed, translucent, blue;  
Heart warped and many-angled;  
With rotten guts and wrists frayed through  
Rheumatically; with sticky tangled  
Orts spread wetly everywhere,  
The shining ground is bright.

'The grass is sharp as shattered glass  
And everything is shining  
With radium's eerie light.

Landscape of despair,  
Landscape with the moon declining.

Ah, in such a lonely place  
The whitish murderer's hanging face  
Laughs like a shimmer in the grass.

## Fieldmouse

Wherein consists our happiness?

'The more one digs in muddy sand,  
Will not one's grief well up the more  
And one the more mistrust one's hand  
As shiftiness grows yet more certain  
And all the landmarks deliquesce?

Spring that swayed in the shadow of the curtain  
Went jogging off like a rickshaw.

Where, o where, is our one true lover?  
'Though we stand in a field as wide as wind  
And blow a whistle, we'll never recover  
The daydreamt girls. They will never come back.

And hopeless, honourless, scrubby-chinned,  
In tear-stained togs like the sodden sack  
'That navvies wear, I walk benighted  
Into my future's yesterday.

Remorse for things that can never be righted  
Stirs like a fieldmouse, runs away.



ing of dogs. But, above all, they shared a passion for music, for the melodies in struck strings. Though there are, of course, great differences between them (the differences, basically, between the guitar and the mandolin), their high-strung similarities remain. There is no evidence that Hagiwara was aware even of Lorca's existence, and his introduction of an almost Western melodic line to Japanese poetry is an entirely original contribution. But it is so real a contribution that some of his poems (notably "Dice of Pure Silver"), will probably have to be translated into music if they are to be translated at all.

HAGIWARA'S most astonishing originality lies, however, in his unique vision of the world. He had, in a highly developed form, the poet's one essential gift: to see first what all can see once it has been shown to them. "Truth," said John Donne, "is a mountain: who would know Truth, about it and about must go." Hagiwara saw that mountain from his own strange belvedere, and his poems remain like arrow-slits in some cold and lonely siege-tower commanding their singular view of the truth. Some have said that his viewpoint was so restricted as to present a topsy-turvy truth, the universe *in camera oscura*: others that he stood so close to Donne's great mountain that inevitably he stood in shadow. But there seems no doubt that, whatever aspect of the truth he saw, none had quite so clearly studied it before him. It is, I think, irrelevant that Hagiwara revealed so dark a beauty.

*Who, grown, can look in a true mirror  
And have no horror?*

Hagiwara saw everything (not, perhaps, everyone) afresh, as if new-made, as if in vision. Indeed, I deduce he must have had constant access to that admittedly lowest level of mystical experience, the Vision of Dame Kind. How rarely are his poems concerned with relations other than relations with things (a characteristic of that Vision); and how frequently he uses not only the word "things" but the visionary's key-word "shining." I know no other poet, except perhaps Rimbaud in *Les Illuminations*, so simultaneously lucent and obscure. It is as though he knew that the sun, that symbol of Japan, rises as much to cast shadow as to give light. Having abandoned not only traditional forms, traditional language, traditional rhythms, as well as what little residue of thought lay in the associated traditional stock of ideas, he is sometimes criticised for lack of intellectual content, for failing to

react positively to the Western revivification of the old Chinese didactic tradition and, in particular, for an uncritical acceptance of the Pathetic Fallacy. But lyric poets are not concerned to maintain logical or philosophical consistencies, and lyricists of Hagiwara's animistic sympathies might well not think that Fallacy fallacious. Though he is buried in the cemetery attached to the Buddhist Shōjunji Temple in Maebashi, he seems never to have adopted any specific religion or philosophy but to have remained a humanistic (or, rather, an animistic) free-thinker all his life. It is, however, relevant to mention, since it explains the otherwise curious frequency of Christian imagery in his poems, that, as a young man, he was much influenced by that cousin, Hagiwara Eiji, a convinced Christian, to whom *Barking at the Moon* is dedicated.

FINALLY, though Hagiwara moves strongly in the mainstream of the Japanese lyric tradition, and though one tributary of his poetic ancestry can be traced back through Bashō to that chill and bitter figure, the one-time master-archer of the late 12th century, Priest Saigyō, he can also claim a place in the main Continental European tradition that runs down through Baudelaire and the Symbolists to the Imagists and their successors. For the element in Hagiwara's work which is utterly unprecedented in the Japanese poetic tradition is the sheer staying power of his lyric inspiration, the unexampled length of poem throughout which he was able to sustain an intensity of feeling which had only been achieved before in short poems such as *tanka*. More than for all his other innovations, Hagiwara's claim to greatness lies in this sustension of lyric intensity. The peculiarly piercing quality of his poetry has been compared to that of a babe new-born into our terrible world. But Hagiwara cried for a lifetime, and in poems that will last as long as the Japanese language.

CONTEMPORARY Japanese poets and critics acknowledge Hagiwara's primacy but tend to regard his work as a dead end. This is, essentially, the criticism made of such slight and minor poets as A. E. Housman; it seems to me unjustified in respect of Hagiwara. It is also argued that the startling originality of his themes and imagery is no more than a direct reflection of the poet's persistent ill-health and spiritual and intellectual neurasthenia. His poetry's consequent aura of irremediable malaise, this argument runs, inevitably appeals to our own distempered times, but it disqualifies Hagiwara from a major place in any healthy tradition. Though it can be argued with per-

## Night Train

In daybreak's feeble light  
The fingerprints that sour  
The glass of the sliding door  
Glint desolately chill.  
Rock ridges, barely white,  
Are still, quicksilver-still.

No passengers yet wake.  
The fagged, electric light  
Pants wearily. The sweet,  
The too-sweet varnish-smell  
And my cigar's stale smoke  
Have made the morning vile.

Yet, if it seems to me  
Vile, how much filthier  
It must appear to her,  
That wife of someone, met  
Merely by rail-chance.

Haven't we  
Passed Yamashina yet?

She turns her pillow's vent,  
Watching with woman's eyes  
Until the cushion sighs  
As winded babies do.

In sudden grief we leant  
Closer and closer to  
And, so companioned,  
We watched beyond the pane  
Of that drab railway-train  
The landscape gorge the light.

And columbines, beyond  
Some village wall, were white.

## Double Feature

In the darkness of a cinema  
In a sleazy part of town  
A white dog without ears was killed,  
Boot-brutally tramped down.

The ghost of that white earless dog  
In after-throes of pain  
Appeared upon the silver screen  
Over and over again.

## Woman

With lips light-pinkly painted  
And powder smelling white  
And cool about the neck-hair,  
Woman,  
Relax the tight  
Thrust of your breasts against me,  
Their sorbo surge.  
Be still,  
And let your whitebait fingers  
Their sly back-tickling skill,  
Woman,  
Forgo. Abandon  
Those surged and scented sighs  
With which you now abandon  
Yourself against my eyes.  
Drop,  
Woman,  
All your little tricks.  
Woman,  
You're sad, who know  
That women, dupes of knowingness,  
Can never let them go.

## White Night

The night-frost creeping close  
Across that chilling sky  
Which steals the sounds of footsteps  
Brings feeling to the eye;  
The feeling that a veil of shimmering  
Light is going by.

Things that were in hiding  
Emerge. They skirt around  
The willow trees in the distance  
With that sly squeechy sound  
Of wet straw-sandals walking  
On water-rotten ground.

Look, silver weapons in their hands  
Sharp in the darkness shine,  
Silver weapons held straight up  
Above the temple-line;  
Arms from the arsenals of light,  
Archaic, argentine.

fect cogency that all lyric poetry reflects some kind of serious disorder in the lyricist, Hagiwara's quintessential sickness seems to me to have no bearing on the lasting importance of his work. I do not suggest that there would be any merit in contemporary imitation of his individual style, diction, imagery or themes; but I do very strongly suggest that Hagiwara's poetry is almost the only example in modern Japanese literature of the successful integration of the Japanese and Western poetic traditions. His poetry is a living synthesis of alien elements, and poets working in either tradition would do well to study the means of his achievement. For Hagiwara has shown that the traditionally compressed Japanese intensity of lyric feeling can be perfectly expressed in the forms and lengths derived from the Western tradition—that the heart of Priest Saigyō can beat in the breast of Lorca. The scientists and surgeons, baffled by problems of "rejection," struggle along fifty years behind him.

It took Japanese poets some fifty years to absorb the shock of the Meiji admission of Western influences, and it may well take another fifty years for the shock sustained in 1945 to be similarly absorbed. The comparative worthlessness, *sub specie aeternitatis*, of the early Meiji imitations of European poets at least suggests the probable worthlessness of contemporary Japanese imitations of Western poetic vogue-styles, which are themselves probably worthless in the first place. There is, of course, no necessary reason why an obsession with the resources of typography, with the restructuring of established syntax and the theories of Yves Bonnefoy, with Olson's Projective Verse, with Concrete Poetry and with the Intentionalist and Affective Fallacies should result in worthless Japanese poetry; but, in practice, worthlessness results. Tradition, said Eliot,

is a matter of much wider significance [than novelty]. It cannot be inherited and, if you want it, you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place, that historical sense nearly indispensable to anyone who would continue a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year. The historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole literature of his own country composes a simultaneous order.

In precisely those terms, and by enormous labour, Hagiwara established himself in the Japanese tradition. Only those Japanese who, like him, can refine and develop the poetic tradition of their own country can hope to become great poets. Shinoda Hajime has recently expressed the seminal thought that per-

haps the similarities between Hagiwara and Eliot reflect the common derivation of essential elements from the main Continental European tradition; and, if that thought be accepted, the work of Hagiwara holds lessons not only for Japanese poets of the future but for the future poets of the world. Only time will tell; though I dare to believe, in the words of Auden's villanelle, that "Time will say nothing but I told you so."

BUT THESE CONSIDERATIONS only concern Hagiwara's status as a major poet of the world. That he is a major poet of Japan is a fact that I am sure nobody can deny. His phenomenal perceptiveness, his lyric hypersensitivity, his remorseless wringing of the nervous system of the soul are unique. And, if in the long run of our tears he does eventually fail to achieve major world-status, it will only be because those very characteristics which give him such laser-sharp penetration necessarily narrowed the breadth of his vision. For his, indeed, is the heart-break at the heart of things.

I WOULD ADD that the attached poems are translations only in the sense that Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat* is a translation of Omar Khayyam. I have not regarded the literal words in Hagiwara's texts as of primary or even secondary importance. Instead, I have sought first to convey the feel and intent of his work, the meaning of the feelings behind the vocabulary; and, secondly, to re-present those feelings in the forms and vocabulary of English. Cultured Iranians fluent in English sometimes laugh (and so, apparently, does Robert Graves) when told that the English regard Fitzgerald's poem as a translation of the *Rubaiyat*. They are, of course, entitled to their merriment; but I think they miss the point. Fitzgerald knew what he was doing, and he did it well: indeed, it is not impossible (if only because more people understand English than the language of the *Rubaiyat*) that Fitzgerald's re-creation will outlast the original. I make no such claim for the durability of my own efforts, for Hagiwara will hold his high position in the world of poetry without the help of alien support. But I would make a strong claim for the validity of Fitzgerald's mode of translation. Literal translations serve a useful purpose and have their honoured place; but they are hall-marked, branded even, by their need for explanatory footnotes. They are, in fact, clay-footnoted. In contrast, works in Fitzgerald's mode, though they are re-creations, remain creations and aspire to life. They have, and need, no footnotes. They explain, because they are, themselves. It follows, of course, that if

## Field Landscape

At the tip of a fishing pole  
Bent round to halve an O,  
One minnow jittering  
As though electrified.

An old man with his whole  
Bent body glittering  
In the transforming flow  
Of an enormous pride.

But all that countryside  
Numb in the summer's warm  
Incurious coma lay:  
Even the cow that stood  
Pat on a distant farm  
Stared off the other way.

## Late Autumn

A train was passing overhead.  
My random thoughts were shadewards led  
And, looking back, I was surprised  
To find my heart so tranquillised.

Along the autumn streets were strewn  
The last rays of the afternoon,  
And traffic thronged the thoroughfare.  
Do I exist? Is there-ness there?

Yet in a house, a gone-for broke  
House on a backstreet where the smoke  
Still hangs in shreds, a window blocks  
Its hollowness with hollyhocks.

they fail to come alive they must come to nothing. "*Traduttori traditori*," say the Italians—translators are traitors. But if these versions of Hagiwara's poetry encourage any reappraisal or wider recognition of his work, I gladly risk that oblivion which is a traitor's fittest doom. Moreover, though translators must in some real sense be traitors, what other form of criticism goes deeper than treachery?

In conclusion, I should explain that, lacking Hagiwara's Catullan delicacy of ear, I have, in translating his poetry (which Auden once brilliantly defined as memorable speech), sought to maintain its memorability with all those technical devices, notably of form, which Hagiwara could afford to disregard. Similarly, I have exploited rhyme. This, as I have said, runs unhappily in the Japanese language, and Hagiwara, who used every other pattern of repeated sound and like-sound, very rarely used it.

But conventional forms have, I believe, developed and survived into conventionality precisely because they mirror best the nature of their origin. Diamonds could presumably be cut into the shapes of peacocks, people, or pantotechnica: but the nature of light and the nature of diamond are, in fact, such that the gem reflects most light when cut in shapes that conform to the realities of nature. Poetry, whose deepest roots go down to incantation and whose strength derives from simple song and dancing, risks a withering the more certain the more it fails to reflect the nature of its sources. Hagiwara, a very great poet, could afford to risk such a loss; I cannot. But if these translations, these transmutations, open for the English-speaking reader even the thinnest band of Hagiwara's orchestrated multi-coloured vision, I shall be as well content as he, *frère hypocrite lecteur*, will be lucky.

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# NOTES & TOPICS

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## The Exaltation of Folly & Reason

*On Intellectual Opiates — By RAYMOND ARON*

A POLEMICAL BOOK which I wrote more than thirteen years ago—*L'Opium des Intellectuels* (1955)—is about to be reprinted by my French publisher, and I have been having thoughts about its “topicality” and general relevance today.

Intellectuals have almost given up smoking Soviet opium since Khrushchev's anti-Stalin speech and the Sino-Soviet schism. The Communist Party still has its organisation, its militants, its *agit-prop* specialists, and even its ideologists and true believers. But Revisionism has deprived the dogma of its absurdities—and its power of fascination. America has never had an exportable equivalent to the system of historico-political thought that the Soviet Union imposed on its friends and erected like a fortress against its enemies. Torn by racial conflict and disfigured by the war in Viet Nam, it does not, in spite of its technical prowess, offer a model of civilisation that other countries want to imitate; still less does it offer any basis for a theory capable of attracting intellectuals in search of a faith.

The events of May in France, following on from the youthful unrest on American campus and West German academic centres, have belied expectations. The attrition of fascist ideologies and the weakening of Marxism-Leninism did not lead to the appearance of “a generation of realists” (or, at any rate, that generation did not last for more than half-a-dozen years). What came, rather, was an explosion of radical Utopianism. The decline of Marxism-Leninism in the West—where it was never indigenous but always a Russian import—favours a resurgence of national traditions and of pre-Marxist types of socialism, Proudhonism or Blanquism in France, populism in the United States, perhaps developments of the “Youth Movement” type (*Jugendbewegung*) in Germany.

For half-a-century the Communist Party kept alive the confused rejection of capitalist society by the French working class (*i.e.*, a fraction of

it), and canalised its expression. This latent rejection may be fading away, but it was taken up recently by young workers on their own account and manifested in spectacular strikes. Trotskyist, Maoist, or Castroite groups swarm and multiply and harass the Communist Party from the Left. A section of the left-wing intelligentsia has adopted a kind of wild Marxism with no fixed dogma, but devoted to a cult of the spontaneity of the masses, even if they are only student masses. On the so-called philosophical level, this section of the intelligentsia supports quite different doctrines, deriving from linguistics or anthropology or structuralism, and all claiming virtues of scientific rigour. Can there be a brand of Maoism capable of reconciling the spontaneity of the masses and pure science? “*On a pris la parole comme on a pris la Bastille*,” and indeed the rush into words has been like the storming of the Bastille. Sometimes the reconciliation seems to be attained by the manipulation of science so that it seems to illuminate “the radical creativity of a cultural revolution.” I am afraid that men of my generation do not succeed in taking this altogether seriously.

ARE WE CONFRONTED with a return to Leninism? The Soviet experience is “dialectically negated,” and this is coupled with a rejection of the specious internationalism imposed for the past half-century by Lenin and his heirs. Is this part of a search for a genuinely national form of socialism (in spite of the similarity of the slogans that spread from Berkeley to the Free University of Berlin by way of Paris)? Are we faced with a new force—revolutionary in its impact even if unconscious of its aims—represented by *students*? They are generally of bourgeois origin, and denounce the spiritual mediocrity and injustice of society: it offers them only careers mapped out in advance, and victimises the others who are left behind by prosperity; all appear to be losers in the great competition that modern democracy establishes as a permanent institution.

PARETO rightly held that rational criticism of *derivations* has very little effect on the *residues*: in other words, on the feelings that make men act, reason, or unreason. Criticism manages at most to reveal the sophistries concealed by the sacred words: *gauche, prolétariat, révolution, histoire*. For lack of those words, the intellectual who is in love with the absolute and is outraged by existing defects of the social order, will find others to justify or rationalise revolt, hostility, verbal or physical violence.

Nonetheless, derivations are symptomatic of a state of mind or of a moment in history. The ideological themes on which the students weave

innumerable variations seem to me to boil down to three: (1) the Consumer society, (2) Democratisation, and (3) rejection of the hierarchy in educational relationships (the latter symbolising interpersonal relationships in industry and society as a whole). Everyone will readily discern that these themes reflect three of the major problems that logically follow from the solutions to the problems of the 1930s and '50s produced, for better or for worse, by the preceding generation.

The criticism of *la société de consommation* that students, following Dr. Marcuse, generally state in para-Marxist terms, carries on and continues the original, essentially romantic (or "re-

## The Perfect Symbol

San Francisco

A NEW YORK-BORN political scientist identified with liberal causes throughout his adult life has been for months the target of a campaign of abuse and harassment on and off the strife-marked campus of San Francisco State College.

Professor John H. Bunzel has been told by dissident students that the values represented by him and fellow liberals form a main stumbling block to student revolutionaries. He has been called a "fascist pig" by left-wing radicals. His two family cars have been smeared with paint and their tyres have been slashed, the police say.

A bomb was found outside his office door, he has received countless "crank calls" over the telephone, and his suburban residence, scene of a burglary, is being watched by the police.

Vandals were seen invading the campus office next to his own upon finding his office door locked, and he has been shouted down time after time by jeering students while trying to conduct classes. A visiting official of the American Civil Liberties Union says he was appalled at the classroom treatment accorded Dr. Bunzel, who is chairman of the college's political science department.

"A group of about seven students caused so much commotion and disruption on one occasion that Professor Bunzel couldn't continue the class," a college vice-president said. But a spokesman for the Black Students Union countered by accusing Dr. Bunzel of "harassing and intimidating" students.

Outwardly, the campus was calm today in the aftermath of a bomb explosion Wednesday night that blinded and maimed Tim Peebles, a 19-year-old member of the Black Students Union. The police say he was holding the bomb in his hands, ready to plant it in the Creative Arts Building, when it exploded.

Professor Bunzel said that a member of Students for a Democratic Society, with whom he was on friendly terms, had told him why

S.D.S., the Black Students Union, the Third World Liberation Front and other militants had made him a marked man.

"You are a perfect symbol," he quoted the student as saying. "You are over 40 years old, you are white and you have a Doctor of Philosophy degree. You are visible, in that you speak your mind in public. You are committed to reason. Your arguments are always rational and organised but, most of all, you are a liberal, you represent liberal values."

Dr. Bunzel believes that "the S.D.S. types couldn't care less about conservatives and reactionaries."

"Their focus," he said, "is on the liberals. Protection of the First Amendment, due process and such things are part of the liberal values that thwart the impulses for revolt and revolution. It makes attainment of these objectives much more difficult in an open society. It's the very freedom the radicals are given that undermines this revolution."

According to Mr. Besig, director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California: "Obviously it was a planned effort to disrupt his class."

Professor Bunzel recalled that some disrupters "shouted quotes from Chairman Mao and his little red book" and continued "a machine-like barrage of billingsgate, throwing questions and shouting and waving their hands."

"They addressed me as 'fascist pig Bunzel'," he said. "One more charitable than the rest called me an 'educated pig'."

"After about 25 minutes I dismissed the first class, telling them I intended to teach the course the way it's been taught. One shouted, 'If we have to bring guns in here you won't teach it. We'll teach you about community power.' I was interrupted by a student who spoke for 10 minutes and demanded, 'Didn't power come out of the end of a gun? He wanted an answer 'right now'.'"

NEW YORK TIMES

actionary") criticism of modern times which Marx integrated into his philosophy while simultaneously denouncing it. The worship of money, the inhumanity of interpersonal relations, the desiccating effect of specialisation in the field of work, the alienation of the producer in and by the things that he produces, all these evils denounced by pessimistic nostalgia for the past are not neglected in the works of the Old Left. But the old implication was that the remedy was socialism, *i.e.*, management by the associated producers. But since neither Soviet-style nor a capitalist affluent society has eliminated these evils—indeed, so far from having been cured, they have been aggravated—what then is left? Nothing but the great rejection, *le grand refus*, with no social class to execute the verdict of historical reason—except the intellectuals and the students. The young rebels have revived a basically commonplace criticism of modern life which is itself as old as time, except that they try to give it a new accent. Whether the banal words are Marxist, Bergson-

ian, or Existential makes no difference; the language changes, but the theme remains the same. Whether the object of production is military power, the conquest of space, or material prosperity, it fails to give "meaning to life," and some price has to be paid for it. The individual has the feeling (and it can actually agonise) that in becoming the master and owner of nature, man has enslaved himself to an inhuman scheme of things.

Unlike the first theme, "democratisation," which is thought of as educational equality for the young of all social classes, cannot be classified as the continuation of an old protest. It represents a stage in the dialectics of equality. Formal equality—*i.e.*, the universal right to education, putting all children in the same schools—is obviously no guarantee of real equality. On the contrary, the social hierarchy is consolidated by selection or educational orientation. The French working man's son has difficulty in qualifying for the *lycée* or if, thanks to gifts displayed at the earliest age, he does

### "What Things Have Come to . . ."

Paris

THERE WERE disturbances at the Sorbonne on Saturday, during the "soutenance de thèse" which M. Lapierre, of the Nice Faculty of Letters, should have given on "The Treatment of News from Israel by the Great French Dailies in 1958" (*thèse complémentaire*) and "Essay on the Basis of Political Power" (*thèse principale*).

The "rapporteur" for the first thesis was Raymond Aron, director of Studies at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes. Although no longer on the staff of the Faculty of Letters, from which he voluntarily resigned in January 1968, Raymond Aron acted as "rapporteur" for this thesis according to tradition, since this responsibility had originally been his.

Elsewhere, a lecture hall had been assigned to the general assembly of the sociology students, arranged for the same time as the "soutenance" (which was to take place in the Salle Louis-Liard). On the Thursday an evening paper announced the meeting of the sociologists, which led the members of the jury (under the presidency of M. Stoetzel, with MM. Raymond Aron, Balandier, Daual and Polin) to expect possible trouble and to consider their position.

Two attitudes were possible in view of the likelihood of disturbances: either to hold the "soutenance" in a room to which the public was not admitted, or else to let it be known to the "contestaires" that it would be held openly and in the hall originally designed for it and that any demonstration which made this

impossible would be most unfair to the candidate (he holds a provincial teaching post and would only be forced to make a second journey to Paris).

The jury decided on the second alternative. Raymond Aron had, in fact, been the previous evening to see M. Las Vergnas, the dean of the faculty, and had told him that he refused to officiate either in conditions of secrecy or of tumult. The dean and the general-secretary, M. Bourjac, replied that they had come to the same decision.

As a result of the disturbances (interruptions, heckling, shouting) the jury twice adjourned the "soutenance" in order to give the candidate a fair chance. He had resumed discussion of the principal thesis when a large number of students began beating on the outsides of the windows of the hall and made it impossible for him to continue speaking.

The dean and M. Polin several times appealed in vain for order. When the windows of the hall were broken, the jury decided unanimously to suspend the session, which will be resumed at a later date. They were all agreed that the doctorate, though fully deserved by a candidate of proved intellectual and moral standing, could not be conferred without the customary "soutenance."

After these incidents the same group of "contestaire" students shouted slogans against Raymond Aron in the courtyard and in the street: "Aron Fasciste!" This is what things have come to.

LE FIGARO

qualify, he runs the risk of failure, of getting lost in a world of culture that is strange to his family, with no help from those closest to him and sometimes with no real motivation for applying himself diligently and succeeding in his studies. When students who, for the most part, come from the privileged classes demand equality in education, are they really expressing a sense of guilt? Are these privileged young people rejecting their privilege? Or, being anxious as some of them are to maintain or increase their privileges (one demand has been: "wages for students"), are they adopting as their own a grievance which, though valid in itself as a result of mechanisms common to all known societies, will preserve its urgency for a long time?

As for the protest against the Hierarchy of university authoritarianism, it partly reflects the student's paradoxical, marginal situation, and partly it symbolises protest against the permanent contradiction between organisation in the interests of efficiency and the democratic, egalitarian ideas as spontaneously interpreted by ordinary mortals.

NOTHING would be further from my purpose than to dismiss these ideological themes as insignificant. But, whether the question is how to improve the "quality of life," or to help workers' or peasants' sons to higher education, or to change the command structure in universities or in industry, there can be no miraculous solution or infallible remedy. These problems can only be tackled by piecemeal reforms, which will have to be different in each country, even if the starting-point is a common aspiration.

These ideological themes are characteristic of a moment in the history of ideas, perhaps of Western society. Does the same apply to the students' revolts? Superficially, they are alike. Students in the East European socialist countries seem to be more "realistic," as they set out their claims for intellectual freedoms which are assured in the West. Everywhere they question both the structure of the university and the structure of society; but at a deeper level the differences are more important than the resemblances. \*

French, German, or Italian students are shaking a university structure that is far more anachronistic than that of American universities. Whatever "student power" they may finally obtain, the fact remains that the Europeans are in revolt against the survivals of the 19th-century university, while the Americans are in revolt against certain results of the 20th-century university. Numbers result in similar phenomena in Paris and at Berkeley, but



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French overcrowding could yield to reasonable reforms, while Californian overcrowding raises the problem: to what extent can one give a bulging age-group so-called higher education without putting into question the very foundations of the university, and without exposing these masses of young people, who may be adult but are still free of the responsibilities of adult life, to the temptations of blind violence or flight?

Just as the structure of the university in each country will ultimately determine the extent of the student rebellion, so will the national situation determine the kind of influence that that revolt will exercise on the state, or the political or economic system. From Berlin to Berkeley the "angry generation" seems to share the same ignorance of the past. The great Depression, Hitler, and Stalin mean nothing to them. When older generations compare the tasks of the present with the enemies they fought, the new "demons" do not strike them as being so very terrible. But the young of a new generation, and no one can have the right to blame them for it, compares the difficulties with their dreams and refuses to be tolerant. The students of Berlin do not put up with the Bonn republic just because Hitler or Ulbricht are worse; Californian students do not compare the condition of the Negroes with that of concentration camp inmates, or the Viet Nam war with the Russian intervention in Hungary in 1956 or in Czechoslovakia in 1968. Each generation sets out from the acquisitions of the past in search of new adventures.

There may be justifications for so doing, but at the same time a risk is being run: ignoring history and suffering its repetitions. Every generation, in every country, has to translate its spirit of revolt into action. Sometimes, when society or the dominant class has lost the capacity to reform itself, revolution becomes the only way out. When society is not agitated by revolutionary aspirations, when the necessary changes do not require violence (or, perhaps, *exclude* it), radical rejection or *la contestation systématique* serve only as an alibi for conservatism, laziness, snobbishness, unless they end by leading to catastrophe. All societies, whether healthy or unhealthy, react when a certain degree of disorder has been reached. The angry young men of Berlin reject Authority and the Nation which young Germans exalted in 1930, but the fanaticism—the fascist style of action—can be seen again in the streets. Total rejection is morally no better than unconditional submission; both are symptoms of *malaise* (and perhaps a stronger word should be used).

MY CRITICISM (written in 1954–55) of the ideological prejudices of the French post-war intelligentsia do not directly apply to our current ideological themes, though the latter, in spite of their lack of systemisation, preserve a number of the confused and powerful ideas orchestrated by the masters of the old Existentialist school.

There are two reasons why I do not propose to renew my critique. The prejudices of yesterday referred to a reality which was supposed to be an incarnation of *la Raison historique*, namely, the Soviet Union. When the point of reference of the revolt becomes Mao's China, Fidel Castro's Cuba, or an unknown utopian future, criticism based on comparison between the ideology and the reality loses its relevance and possible effectiveness. During the immediate post-war period, derivations presented themselves in a form sufficiently worked out to permit, if not to call for, a range of academic discussion. The residues of the French students who are the followers of Jacques Lacan or Louis Althusser escape from the field of argument. As these young people want to change, not only society, but man himself, and as they refuse to visualise the order that will emerge from the upheaval, what would be the use of a dialogue, which in any case they refuse in advance?

But, in spite of everything, this dialogue of yesterday, which came to an end for lack of combatants, has regained a significance which it seemed to have lost some years ago when Althusser's Marxists contemptuously dismissed as "ideology" the humanism of Marx and of their spiritual father.

The student Commune is the revenge of Sartre on Lévi-Strauss, of existentialism on structuralism; at least that is what M. Epistemon, a psychoanalyst touched by revolutionary grace at Nanterre, considers it to be. The French intelligentsia has lived through some of its finest hours. For three weeks the revolution reigned amid festivities and words. In May 1968 every intellectual in Paris abandoned himself to the exaltation of folly or of reason, depending on his inclination.

My own inclination with the book on *The Opium of the Intellectuals*, first published thirteen years ago, was and still is to make a contribution to the *Critique de la Raison déraisonnante*, the "critique of unreasoning reason," in modest imitation of Marx's own criticism of the young Hegelians, the companions of his youth, who remained perpetual prisoners not in the cave of appearances but in the empyrean of disincarnated concepts.

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## BOOKS & WRITERS

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### The Prophet Ezra v. "The Egotistical Sublime"

On Pound, Eliot, Joyce — By JOHN WAIN

IN NOVEMBER 1917, as the First World War rolled into its final sickening phase, engulfing not only Europe and Asia Minor but also the United States, a small, neat pamphlet was issued by the young firm of Alfred A. Knopf in New York. Unsigned, it bore the title *Ezra Pound his Metric and Poetry*. The author, as "everyone knows" by this time, was T. S. Eliot, who had known Pound personally for some three years and had already learnt crucial lessons from him: or, to put it more accurately, been stimulated and prompted by him to crucial advances in his own work.

Thus early did Eliot begin his lifelong acknowledgment of what Pound had done, and meant, for him. The essay itself is not profound criticism; Eliot will do much better things soon; but it makes the essential points, and it has the interest and excitement of being written by a practitioner in an absorbing phase of his own development. Eliot sketches Pound's development from his first book, *A Lume Spento* (Venice, 1909) to the moment when, in that same year, he printed the first few Cantos in Harriet Monroe's magazine, *Poetry*, and shows the continual advance in technique and the maturing of character that can be seen as keeping pace with it. By the time Pound publishes *Riposte* (1912), "The effect of London is apparent; the author has become a critic of men, surveying them from a consistent and developed point of view; he is more formidable and disconcerting; in short, much more mature." To the charge that Pound is a jackdaw gathering scraps from various literatures, Eliot has a convincing reply:

There are influences, but deviously. It is rather a gradual development of experience into which literary experiences have entered. These have not brought the bondage of temporary enthusiasms, but have liberated the poet from his former restricted sphere. There is Catullus and Martial, Gautier, Laforgue and Tristan Corbière.

And to the accompanying charge, that Pound heaped up his materials without due regard for "form," Eliot replies by drawing attention to the alertness of Pound's ear for rhythm and cadence, the devotion with which he has compared and studied many kinds of poetic form, and concludes:

The freedom of Pound's verse is rather a state of tension due to constant opposition between free and strict. There are not, as a matter of fact, two kinds of verse, the strict and the free; there is only a mastery which comes of being so well trained that form is an instinct and can be adapted to the particular purpose in hand.

Already, I think, the youthful Eliot had hit on the essential qualities that make Pound's poetry interesting and valuable. It is rhythmically alive and supple; the characteristically Poundian note, with its blend of the speaking and the singing voice, has seemed fatally easy to imitate but is in fact very personal to him. It is the work of a man who knows that art cannot be taken at the gallop, and also knows enough about diverse forms and kinds of art to avoid enslavement to any narrow system of regulations. Pound's freedom, like Picasso's, was reached through the formal study of correctness. He was able to teach a whole generation how to move away from strict form while keeping the strictness that matters, the discipline of living statement without padding or self-indulgent imprecisions.

No doubt Eliot left his name off the pamphlet because the names of the two poets were, in literary circles, often mentioned together, and an unsigned tribute, however the shrewd might guess it to be Eliot's, would do Pound more good in the world. Signed or not, it came with the authority of a new and important poet, for Eliot had published *Prufock and Other Observations* in London only a few months earlier.

This was the period when Pound and Eliot found their minds working most closely together; soon would come the Poundian doctoring of *The Waste Land* and its dedication to *il miglior fabbro*. But indeed, it was during this decade or so that Pound's mind seemed to have the unlimited suppleness and power that made it able to work with that of any first-rate artist. Before meeting Eliot, he had spent that memorable winter of 1913 living with Yeats in a cottage on the edge of Ashdown Forest, seeing it as a "duty to posterity," and Yeats had shown a surprising docility in accepting Pound's suggestions for his work. "He is full of the Middle Ages," Yeats wrote to Lady Gregory, "and helps me to get back to the definite and concrete, away from modern abstractions; to talk over a poem with him is like getting you to put a sentence into dialect. All becomes clear and natural."

That Yeats, over twenty years Pound's senior and a poet of world fame, should allow Pound so unceremoniously to go through his poems and "eliminate the abstract"—the words are Yeats' own—is surprising and highly creditable. What appealed to Yeats, evidently, was Pound's instinctive drive towards what was clear, direct, unhampered, and above all concrete. In his essay "A Few Don'ts from an Imagiste," published in that same year of 1913, Pound was offering this advice to young poets.

Don't use such an expression as "dim lands of peace." It dulls the image. It mixes an abstraction with the concrete. It comes from the writer's not realising that the natural object is always the adequate symbol.

An expression like "dim lands of peace" might easily have come from the early works of Yeats, where such turns of phrase abound. But Yeats, Pound or no Pound, was already moving towards a full trust in "the natural object"—i.e., the object as seen objectively, in its own nature—as "the adequate symbol." From *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1919) through *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* (1921) to *The Tower* (1928) and the final flowering that lay beyond, his achievement was to make his symbols both more naked and more inclusive.

Some fifteen years later, when Pound had washed his hands of London, moved to Paris, washed his hands of Paris and made his final choice of a habitat in Mussolini's Italy, Yeats dedicated to him, as *A Packet for Ezra Pound*, the first exiguous version of *A Vision*, and prefaced it with that shrewd little sketch of Pound feeding the cats in the alley: so tolerant, so affectionate, and yet so undeceived, that we must quote it once again:

Sometimes about ten o'clock at night I accompany him to a street where there are hotels upon one side, upon the other palm-trees and the sea, and there, taking out of his pocket bones and pieces of meat, he begins to call the cats. He knows all their histories—the brindled cat looked like a skeleton until he began to feed it; that fat grey cat is an hotel proprietor's favourite, it never begs from the guests' tables and it turns cats that do not belong to the hotel out of the garden; this black cat and that grey cat over there fought on a roof of a four-storied house some weeks ago, fell off, a whirling ball of claws and fur, and now avoid each other. Yet now that I recall the scene I think that he has no affection for cats—"some of them so ungrateful," a friend says—he never nurses the café cat, I cannot imagine him with a cat of his own. Cats are oppressed, dogs terrify them, landladies starve them, boys stone them, everybody speaks of them with contempt. If they were human beings we could talk of their oppressors with a studied violence, add our strength to theirs, even organise the oppressed and like good politicians sell our charity for power. I examine his criticism in this new light, his praise of writers pursued by ill-luck, left maimed or bedridden by the War; and thereupon recall a person as unlike him as possible, the only friend who remains to me from late boyhood, grown gaunt in the injustice of what seems her blind nobility of pity: "I will fight until I die," she wrote to me once, "against the cruelty of small ambitions." Was this pity a characteristic of his generation that has survived the Romantic Movement, and of mine and hers that saw it die—I too a revolutionist—some drop of hysteria still at the bottom of the cup?

This is the insight of a poet, and a great one. Pound's sympathy for the stray cats is based not on love of the cats but on the need to fight something, to resist and be indignant about something, to hit back, to strike an heroic attitude even in a small matter. If cats were human beings, we could organise them and thus "sell our charity for power." Yeats here puts his finger on that dark spot in Pound's character which made him into a Fascist—the need to dramatise a set of grievances, to embrace a system constructed out of negatives, in the hope that if he invested enough strength of will and purpose he could turn the sum total into a positive.

ABOUT THIS TIME, too, Eliot began gently but firmly indicating that he and Pound did not, in fact, hold identical views, however close a bond there might be between them as artists. In his lectures at the University of Virginia in 1933, published the next year as *After Strange Gods*, Eliot touched on the same impulse in Pound that had alerted Yeats, the need to use

resentment as a motive power. He described the "hell" passages in the Cantos as "a hell for the other people," and went on to say that in spite of Pound's learning in medieval literatures, his identification with them seemed to be of the surface; that he was "attracted to the Middle Ages, apparently, by everything except that which gives them their significance."

Naturally Pound was not going to stand for that, and when in the same year he published (with the firm for which Eliot worked) his collection of essays, *Make It New*, he included in the Introduction, or "Date Line," an obvious reference to Eliot's comment. After dismissing Christianity in comic-satirical terms, he went on—

Further attempt to answer Mr. Eliot's indirect query as to "What Mr. P. believes," would be perhaps out of place at this juncture. The peculiar frenzies of the Atys cult seem unadapted to the pleasanter parts of the Mediterranean basin. I have, I think, at no time attempted to conceal my beliefs from my so eminent colleague, but I have at all times desired to know the demarcation between what I know and what I do not know. . . .

The heading "Date Line" is significant. At the head of his note Pound writes, "*Rapallo Jan. 28th, anno XII.*" He is using the Fascist calendar, as he frequently does in his correspondence at this period.

So WHAT? Where are we going? My excuse for heaping up this (to many people) familiar data is that a book has appeared which takes one's mind back once more to the story of Pound's involvement with the literature and art of his time, to his presence as instigator, torcador, gadfly, mentor, fixer, during the decade from 1910 to 1920 and for several years spilling out at either end of that decade. Pound knew virtually everyone who was engaged in the effort to bring to birth an idiom that should be of the 20th century rather than the 19th; to all of them he offered encouragement, and to many of them he was able to give practical help. They reacted in various ways. At one extreme we find Wyndham Lewis, who accepted Pound's help during the difficult war years, and later made one of his bullying attacks on him in *Time and Western Man* (1927). At the other, Eliot with his unfailing loyalty and generosity to the man, even when he must have been horrified by the ideas and attitudes. Yeats accepted Pound's help gracefully and repaid the debt with affection, though with unfailing clear-sightedness. And now, at last, we have the full story of Pound's relationship with the one colossus still to be

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named: James Joyce.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Forrest Read has brought together, and set in a connecting thread of narrative, the surviving letters between Pound and Joyce, and also Pound's repeated pronouncements on the importance of Joyce's art. The result is sometimes hilarious, sometimes saddening, always deeply revealing.

WHEN CONTEMPLATING Pound's literary career, the first thing that strikes one is his altogether exceptional generosity to fellow-artists. I do not blame artists for being jealous and suspicious of one another; it is better simply to accept this as a fact of nature, for, as Blake noted,

*The poison of the honey-bee  
Is the artist's jealousy.*

Still, it is a sadly obvious fact that writers, in particular, are nearly always very grudging in praise of their coevals. They find it easy enough to be generous and encouraging to very young writers, and to make the right noises in the presence of aged practitioners who have survived from the generation before-last; but among their own generation, against whom they feel they are being measured, they show the pursed mouth and the narrow, sidelong glance. (This is why, incidentally, publishers show very little discernment when they egg on practising writers, in mid-career, to write books expressing their opinion of their fellow-practitioners, to unburden their souls between hard covers on "the novel now" and such-like themes. Surveys of this kind should be left to non-practitioners who have no deflecting personal interest.)

Pound is the great exception to this rule, sitting at the typewriter day after day and knocking out articles in support of those contemporaries in whose work he believed—Eliot, Wyndham Lewis, Gaudier-Brzeska, George Antheil and, repeatedly, Joyce. He pestered official bodies and private patrons for grants: he hammered wedges into orthodox opinion; he scurried about finding accommodation, fixing jobs, having this translated and that published, till the reader follows the account with increasing dizziness. Surely there has never been such an example of selflessness on the part of a practising writer; if we comb literary history we can turn up a few examples of writers who have helped their contemporaries, but on the way we shall encounter dozens of shocking stories of meanness, vindictiveness or (at best) a steady

indifference such as Joyce maintained towards his contemporaries from first to last.

Why, one asks oneself. Why was Pound so different? The answer lies partly in Pound's generosity which (within a personal rather than a political context) has never been in doubt. But there is something else. Pound's make-up as an artist has also to be considered. If the word "fascist" could be cleansed of its hideous associations it would make an excellent description of Pound's turn of mind, for *fascis* is Latin for a bundle, and Pound has always delighted in making up bundles. Though he has spent so much time fighting the literary establishment, he is not by nature a lone wolf, as Joyce was. He does not mind finding himself in opposition, but he dislikes solitude; he has none of the Joycean predilection for ploughing a lonely furrow. All his life he has liked to travel in a "cloud of witnesses." In a sense, all his work is propaganda for an ideal civilisation, a City of Man; he has never sought to claim our attention for the promptings of his individual inner voice, but rather for something of value that he has found in Provençal, in mediaeval Italian, in Anglo-Saxon, in classical Latin or Chinese. The early *personae*, masks of the Roman actor, modulate easily into the key-figures of the later Cantos, from Jefferson to Confucius.

Pound has, then, always sought to win our assent not simply to his own thoughts, but to the thoughts of other minds with whom his has been in resonance. And here we have the clue to his astonishing generosity. Not to belittle it, but to bring it within the sphere of human comprehension. In his best years, Pound saw himself as the instigator of a new Renaissance. He loved Europe, but the Europe he found when he arrived (from Idaho *via* Wabash College) was moribund in so many respects: moribund in art, in literature, in civilisation. Finding here and there a practitioner of one or another art who shared his dissatisfaction and—more shakily—shared his programme for improving things, Pound hooped them all together within his enthusiastic approval as a *fascis*, called by him "the party of intelligence." From the start, he needed "a party," just as Joyce, from the start, needed to avoid any such embroilment.

IN THE END, it could not be done. Pound reached out for valuable elements wherever he perceived them, and at first his mind was big enough and strong enough to provide a marshalling-yard for everything that came in. His work up to, say, 1930 really does have a unity: the unity of his own personality and of the coherence of those things he finds necessary. After that, "the centre cannot hold." More and more material

<sup>1</sup> *Pound/Joyce*. The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce, with Pound's Essays on Joyce. Edited and with Commentary by FORREST READ. Faber and Faber, 70s.

keeps arriving, and there is really nowhere to put it. I leave aside, for obvious lack of competence to discuss it, the question of how far Pound's mental stress, the partial cracking of his mind that seems to have set in by about 1940, aggravated this situation and how far it was merely the result of trying to fulfil an impossible programme. What, on the other hand, I *can* see is what anybody can—the result lying before us on the printed page. The Cantos begin to ramble and become boring; there is, under the shock of calamity and suffering, a new and poignant note in the "Pisan cantos," but shortly afterwards the old disintegration sets in until we reach the incoherent unreadability of *Rock-drill* and *Thrones*.

Much the same thing happened to Joyce in his last twenty years, though for opposite reasons. Where Pound's later work flies apart from centrifugal force, all the fragments pulling away from the centre, Joyce, after the great central effort of *Ulysses*, began to revolve in ever-narrowing circles until he finally disappeared up his own orifice. *Finnegans Wake*, in spite of its impressive testimony to its author's willingness to "work" in the sense of putting in a vast number of hours at his desk, is in fact the product of exhaustion; it adds nothing vital to *Ulysses*; the best way to get it into perspective is to set it beside the late poems of Yeats, which really do represent a renewal of strength. Yeats, in old age, *moved*; Joyce went round and round.

I REALISE THAT IN TAKING this disenchanted view of the late Cantos and of *Finnegans Wake* I have against me the devoted testimony of all those "specialists" who have written shelf after shelf of books on both these topics. These books, however, seem to me the product of an amiable and interesting hobby rather than of any vital concern with literature. Both Joyce and Pound are, of course, major authors with masterpieces to their credit; they rightly engage the attention of critics, editors, biographers; but the kind of "Poundian" or "Joycean" whose mind relishes the slow shredding-out of clues in the *Wake* or the later Cantos, who is drawn to these works by the opportunities for sleuthing that they afford, seems to me on much the same level as the "Baconian" of yesteryear, whose motive for reading Shakespeare was to hunt for cryptograms. They neglect the essential importance of the very authors they expound; in place of vital human concerns, they offer a hobby, a pastime for winter evenings.

IF I HAVE HURT anyone's feelings, I am sorry for it, but at least I can cite support from Pound in my opinion of *Finnegans Wake*

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("nothing short of divine vision or a new cure for the clapp can possibly be worth all the circumambient peripherisation"), and from Yeats on the Cantos. Since Yeats died in 1939 he obviously did not see the real splintering of the later Cantos, but we can guess what his attitude to it would have been, not only from specific criticisms he made of Pound, in print and elsewhere, but such remarks as that in a letter to his father during the composition of *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*:

One goes on year after year getting the disorder of one's own mind in order, and this is the real impulse to create.

No doubt we all have our own idea of what constitutes "getting the disorder of one's own mind in order," and both Pound and Joyce probably thought of themselves, in the system-building of their later work, as doing just that. But neither's system impressed the other. Pound originally championed Joyce as the exponent of a hard clarity, something to set over against that squashy, over-decorated quality he seems to have found everywhere in English and American writing of the recent past. Time and time again, in his propagandising articles, he presents Joyce as the heir of Flaubert, the master of exactitudes. It ties up with that recurrent theme of his, the contention that national and international truth-telling, the clear-sightedness that does not put up with evasion and cant, withers away before the power of language cleanly used. Pound stated these two points of view, the Joycean point and the general point, so repeatedly that one can hardly open the book without coming upon one or the other, and they often occur together, as in this passage from his article in *The Egoist* for February 1917:

Flaubert pointed out that if France had studied his work they might have been saved a good deal in 1870. If more people had read *The Portrait* and certain stories in Mr. Joyce's *Dubliners* there might have been less recent trouble in Ireland. A clear diagnosis is never without its value.

Apart from Mr. Joyce's realism—the school-life, the life in the University, the family dinner with the discussion of Parnell depicted in his novel—apart from, or of a piece with, all this is the style, the actual writing: hard, clear-cut, with no waste of words, no bundling up of useless phrases, no filling in with pages of slosh.

<sup>2</sup> It is particularly interesting that the Pound/Joyce volume should appear, presumably by chance, at the same time as the first popular low-priced edition of *Ulysses* for a mass market (Penguin Books, 10s).

It is very important that there should be clear, unexaggerated, realistic literature. It is very important that there should be good prose. The hell of contemporary Europe is caused by the lack of representative government in Germany, and by the non-existence of decent prose in the German language. Clear thought and sanity depend on clear prose. They cannot live apart. The former produces the latter. The latter conserves and transmits the former.

The mush of the German sentence, the straddling of the verb out to the end, are just as much a part of the befuddlement of Kultur and the consequent hell, as was the rhetoric of later Rome the seed and the symptom of the Roman Empire's decadence and extinction. A nation that cannot write clearly cannot be trusted to govern, nor yet to think.

Germany has had two decent prose-writers, Frederick the Great and Heine—the one taught by Voltaire, and the other saturated with French and with Paris. Only a nation accustomed to muzzy writing could have been led by the nose and bamboozled as the Germans have been by their controllers.

The terror of clarity is not confined to any one people. The obstructionist and the provincial are everywhere, and in them alone is the permanent danger to civilisation. Clear, hard prose is the safeguard and should be valued as such. The mind accustomed to it will not be cheated or stampeded by national phrases and public emotionalities.

To Pound, that is, the essential Joyce is already there in *Dubliners*, and is fully developed in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. When *Ulysses* begins to roll off the assembly line, Pound is equally enthusiastic about it, and appears willing to accept it on the same terms, i.e., as an exercise in truth-telling. One looks in vain for any discussion of the real significance of *Ulysses*—its mythopocia. By providing Mr. Bloom's adventures with their Homeric backdrop, Joyce had moved on from late 19th-century realism to the characteristic vein of modern literature, the mythologising of experience.<sup>2</sup> Pound was at this very time writing his early Cantos, using the Odyssean parallels in much the same way, yet he seems curiously to attach little importance to the fact that he and Joyce had both taken this crucial step at the same moment. Joyce, in spite of his detachment, was very well aware that something of this kind was going on; not long after his arrival in Paris he writes to Stanislaus:

Odyssey very much in the air here. Anatole France is writing *Le Cyclope*, G. Fauré, the musician an opera *Pénélope*. Giraudoux has written *Elpenor* (Paddy Dignam). Guillaume Apollinaire *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*.

"Madame Circe," he adds (25 July 1920) "advances regally towards her completion after which I hope to join a tennis club."

Still insisting on the point that Joyce was a truth-teller, a swiller-out of the Augean stables, Pound could go along as far as *Ulysses*. After that, the journey seemed to him to be on a wrong route. He dropped off long before *Finnegans Wake* took its final shape. Joyce, for his part, had never had anything to say about Pound's art and seems to have regarded his involvement in politics with lofty amusement.

The more I hear of the political, philosophical, ethical zeal and labours of the brilliant members of Pound's big brass band the more I wonder why I was ever let into it "with my magic flute..."

Pound, of course, remains: not only as a poet to whom one can always turn back with satisfaction and stimulus, but as that rarity, a genuine "key figure," one of those men against whom the other men of their time instinctively measure themselves. His art breaks down, in the end, because his grip on his own reality becomes weak; he tries to carry such a load, and without firm ground under his feet—as a cosmopolite, a citizen of nowhere—it is impossible. Joyce failed in his later years for the opposite reason; he stood on the same spot and bored in like a termite. Meanwhile, Eliot and Yeats developed and moved on; and the minor figures, such as Wyndham Lewis, disappeared in a cloud of querulousness.

And Joyce? Does he come out of it as merely selfish, a one-way valve for appreciation, kindness, encouragement? I do not think so. His was not the usual shrill, nagging ingratitude of the literary character. It had something much more rock-like about it. In character, Joyce was like a Henry Moore sculpture on a bare hillside. He never budged; he never made concessions or explained himself; if people saw what he was doing and supported him in it, he was grateful, but if they fell away he barely noticed the fact. If we search for a parallel to the Joycean temperament in previous literary history we shall, I think, find it best in Wordsworth. Mr. W. W. Robson, in his *Critical Essays* (1966), writes with fine perception about Wordsworth's undoubted egotism:

This topic is not a simple one. Wordsworth's creative genius is intimately bound up with his way of using the word "I"—a word so simple to use, so baffling to think about. His sense of the unfathomable depths of the mind, the ego, unforgettably stated in the opening of *The Recluse*, is pervasive in his best poetry. His greatness appears in the unmistakable note with which he speaks of



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*Those forests unapproachable by death,  
That shall endure as long as man endures  
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To struggle, to be lost within himself  
In trepidation, from the blank abyss  
To look with bodily eyes and be consoled.*

He would not be Wordsworth without it; and yet... Keats found a great phrase, summing up the blend of admiration and censure which we cannot but feel, in the presence of his unflagging solemn self-preoccupation: "the egotistical sublime." Censure there must be; we cannot ignore the ordinal moral meaning of the word egotism. But in mitigation we must remember that few original geniuses have ever been met with such derision and incomprehension.

Yes, the Keatsian phrase fits Joyce as perfectly as it fits Wordsworth; he was egotistical and he was sublime, and he needed to weld these qualities together into a carapace that would help him to endure misunderstanding

and ridicule. In the end, Joyce strikes one as a lesser artist than Yeats, for precisely the reason that Yeats could take his carapace off when necessary. Yeats' stubborn pride, his fierce joy in isolation and *plaisir aristocratique de déplaire*, are fully developed by the time he writes "To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Nothing"; but he can come out from his shell, and be soft and vulnerable to life, and so he goes on developing, suffering, growing. Joyce, after *Ulysses*, cultivated the ultimate defiance of the artist: "this is right because I do it." In the end, his refusal to explain himself, to listen to any syllable of criticism, is symptomatic of a hardening of the mental arteries. He was, we may fancy, not altogether joking—not joking at all, perhaps?—when he wrote to Miss Weaver about *Work in Progress*: "I know it is no more than a game, but it is a game that I have learned to play in my own way. Children may just as well play as not. The ogre will come in any case."

## Visit to Inner Space

*On Nuttall's "Bomb Culture" — By DAVID MARTIN*

IT IS CHARACTERISTIC of a writer like Jeff Nuttall that he has no external biography.<sup>1</sup> The fly-leaf gives us a foreground not a background: there isn't even a claim to the status of "genuine working class." We know that he plays the trumpet, but do not know where he went to school. "Nuttall" suggests Lancashire. Was he the clever boy who went to the Grammar School, found it stiff and stuffy, and then drifted into those groups of jazz club drop-outs described in Brian Jackson's study of *Working Class Community*?

One wants to know those things because he is so confusing. He speaks with many voices, all of them interesting, but it is difficult to know which is his. One moment he is a rural innocent dancing around a phallus, the next restating the Augustinian doctrine of original sin and empathising with William Burroughs on the margins of Manicheism. He is also confused and confusing in the sequence of his ideas, not of course that one would expect an exemplar of McLuhanite psychic subversion to write with the linear rationality of an Ayer.

More than that he confuses his own autobiography with the history of a culture—as if the Direct Grant Schools had already disappeared. No doubt he is the new new wave, but often the fate of waves is to disappear into the sands. Towards the end of the book he seems on the verge of a breakdown and then suddenly turns and addresses the psychic world (and himself) in terms which suggest a "return" to right reason. One has the impression he may soon be able to listen to Mozart without wanting to smash something. His is the kind of rich, disordered imagination that has to explore all his own contradictions before it can begin to establish any form of coherence. This book could be the end of one stage and intimation of the next.

LET ME TAKE his main thesis: that the rebellious culture produced by the "Bomb"—the Bomb being a kind of concentrated symbol for the last quarter of a century, is a reaction in favour of life by all those who cannot accept the suicide pact made by the Squares: the Fathers and the Politicians. The inhabitants of the Bomb Culture live in a uniquely contingent world and it is the politicians who are to blame. This argument is not of course a new one: referring to the late 1920s Herbert Butterfield remarked on

<sup>1</sup> *Bomb Culture*. By JEFF NUTTALL. MacGibbon and Kee, 36s.

a tendency to blame the Fall on to the politicians and the older generation. For Mr. Nuttall one doesn't need to be born again to escape the Fall: it is enough to have been born after 1945. The Fall-out supplants the Fall.

The denigration of politicians by those who are ignorant of politics or who are hooked on the pleasures of moral indignation is frequent enough and occurs as much on the Right as it does on the Left. But in Jeff Nuttall's case it is a flight from politics by someone who has half-glimpsed the complexities of the situation and who can only blame the politician for his limited success in dealing with such complexities. Yet political success is always limited because the material of the politicians' art is the most recalcitrant of all. Mr. Nuttall's complaints are those of an action painter sneering at somebody who works in mosaic. Most of the time it is a triumph to survive; and the achievements of a de Gaulle are positively Byzantine in every sense.

This is where the paradoxes of our situation are most evident; and no explanation of our situation is adequate which does not lean heavily on paradox. The point is that our world is both more contingent, because of the politicians, and also more secure, equally because of the politicians. We feel on the edge of de-

struction *and* on the margin of undreamt-of securities, horrified and dazzled by a cosmic question mark and a cosmic promise.

Mr. Nuttall's explanation leans too much on his own autobiography in that most young people are *not* facing that cosmic question mark but simply luxuriating in the securities at a level which allows them no access to the costs humanity has paid to acquire them, nor even to the very notion of cost, let alone of opportunity cost. (Leave that to bourgeois economists: but it is a central concept of sociology as well.) After all, it is the generation immediately preceding my own and Mr. Nuttall's which *should* be alienated. They lived, contrary to his supposition, in just as contingent a world as ours, though the form of the contingency was different; and they were actually asked to pay the costs of alternative choices, including those Marxists who actually had to run Communist societies as distinct from those whose Marxism is that of playboys in the Western World. (Cf. *Student Power*, by Alexander Cockburn and Robin Blackburn.) Now, however, we in Western Europe are no longer asked to pay, except in terms of the psychological turmoil illustrated in this book, precisely because of the Bomb we excrete and because the shield of the hated Americans protects us. Perhaps this is partly

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why we hate them: they preserve us even from the unpleasant experience of conscription. In short, the spiritual exhibitionists of our time have the money and the opportunity to mount their travelling exhibitions because of their "lying Dads," precisely because of American power and the sheltering, tolerant affluence of the despised liberal societies. Mr. Nuttall is quite wrong: the fathers ate the "sour grapes" (however much it is the children's teeth which are set on edge), and some of them have even enough security to enjoy the luxurious guilts of the really rich.

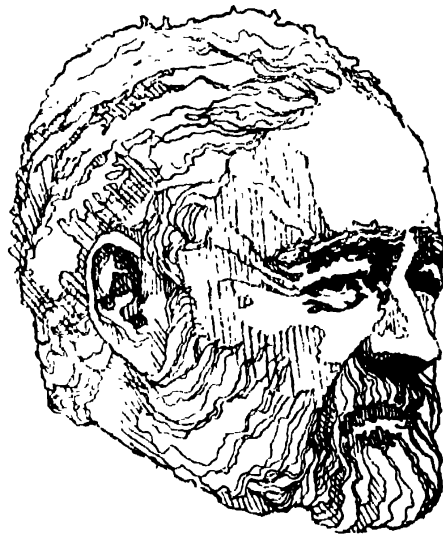
JEFF NUTTALL is more convincing when he describes the sequence of sub-cultural development, and in detail he is highly perceptive. He believes a convergence has gradually taken place between the student world and the culture of the under-privileged. This convergence produces a world-wide coalition against the squares, for which the assistance and leadership of the Left-liberals is no longer necessary. The old liblabs—a Kingsley Martin or a John Collins—specialised in "honourable argument" not psychic subversion. But in a world where the linear sequence of logic has become the total and immediate impact of the image, the only viable tactic is to massage the soft psychic underbelly of the system. *C.N.D.* was the last time the old Left-liberal led the new generation: when that had failed the young decided to do their own thing. After that not even Arnold Wesker's Culture-for-the-Masses was acceptable. The sequence ran from the "Teds" to "the Underground," with the Goon Show, skiffle, and the Beatles expanding the link between students and the underprivileged. The sub-cultures of the world united against Culture; and the new clerks betrayed Culture in its own citadel.

Sometimes Nuttall writes as if this were new: certainly the treason to culture in the old sense seems to me notable in its extent. Roy Fuller's recent lecture (*T.L.S.*, "Philistines and Jacobins," 20 February 1969) has argued that the prosperous Philistines of the last century were as nothing compared to prosperous barbarians of the present. Yet the ideas are not original and the range of artistic reference and literary quotation in this book sets them, however, unsystematically, in some sort of historical depth. Indeed *Bomb Culture* is a sort of extended epilogue to Mario's Praz's *The Romantic Agony* and an anthology of the spiritual disorders consequent on Romanticism. My own work on pacifism analysed the last outbreak of these phenomena in the 1930s: the inherent antagonism between the Left rationalists and the Romantic anarchists, and the recurring overlapping sequences of dreaminess and activism,

withdrawal and potency, making love and making war.

Indeed some of the categories of the sociology of religion are worth invoking in dealing with this kind of material. Broadly we are dealing with modern versions of the mystical and sectarian mode of protest. The mystical mode recovers the total simplicity of the world of the Child and aspires to a unity of experience, with or without drugs. In this condition the mystic may also find himself exploring every negative experience, in order to make possible his return to the world as a "total" human being. Meanwhile he cannot meet the demands of the world or comprehend its external complexity because nothing is relevant except his own internal experience and his quest for wholeness. If wholeness cannot be achieved he confines himself to exploring the fullest extent of negation in all its Manichean disgust and obscene diversity. Nuttall describes this state of mind in William Burroughs. This is not usually a serious danger to society, except in so far as such people can combine the child's world with a total lack of self-control in which the experience of God is achieved orgasmically. It remains a nuisance, of course, because the mystic is outside of time, of rational social-organisation, of technical efficiency, even indeed outside communication (especially, on occasion, the communication of language). Hence the preference for art and film. He achieves a psychic return to an unsemanticised world before the word brought order and temporal sequence out of chaos. To quote from a manifesto in this book, he aspires to a "world without clocks."

THE OTHER MODE is a sectarian one which is also the next point of development in the child's world: binary discriminations—hence, perhaps, the role of this notion in facilitating the popularity of Lévi-Strauss. The world of politics is seen in terms of straight oppositions derived from the vocabulary of religion, not only True and False Consciousness but the children of Light and the children of Darkness. Moreover, original sin is an important category misused to indicate the systematic character of the evil which encompassed every aspect of the great society you are fighting against. Everything connects with everything else: Viet Nam and examinations, or (to use an example given in this book) the "Moors murder" was a sign that "it" had started. On the whole this type of politics, in which all the categories of political calculation and balance of evils are indiscriminately overwhelmed by the categories of sectarian religion, is more characteristic of the so-called "Socialist Societies" in our universities than of the Underground described by Nuttall. Never-



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COLLINS

theless he has his own basic division into Hippies and Squares in which the former possess all the ontological advantages. Quite characteristically he believes that only the young semi-psychopath is capable of creation just as only he is capable of genuine, enjoyable procreation. To adapt to his own style: the sex life of the squares always goes off at half-cock. Nor it is credible to him that even squares trained in universities are capable of seeing "orient and immortal wheat" through their windows at ten o'clock in the morning.

Yet the "creative" work he cites (leaving Mailer aside) shows little enough capacity, and his only riposte is to claim that "toffee-nosed" university people are debarred from appreciating those marvellous offerings. Indeed, now that the men of the Underground have been through a "range of exaltation and despair unique since Shakespeare" their "supremely informed sensibilities" are ready to surprise us all.

Happily such faith is matched by saving doubts. First, he queries whether the Underground may not be an inverted case of the evils it most declaims against. Second, he restates not only the orthodox doctrine of original sin but also the Christian doctrine of mystical experience. In his view, to be alienated is the defining characteristic of being human—and the attempt to end the rich possibilities of alienation, and the divine purpose underlying it, is man's most disastrous aspiration. As regards mysticism: "You can't dig It if you are It." He invites "us back to the Self, to classic form and rational serenity..."

It is almost as if he realised that the dynamism of our civilisation depended on an interplay between distortions too gross and balances too serene. To rest in the achievements of that civilisation is certainly not enough, but it does look as if Mr. Nuttall may be tired of peddling his own accelerated obsolescence. I doubt whether he is quite ready to enjoy the praise of a square but I'm afraid I have to say it—both he and his book are, as the Laugh-In man has it, very interesting.

## Young Man from the Rhondda

**Print of a Hare's Foot.** An Autobiographical Beginning. By RHYS DAVIES. Heinemann, 50s.

MR. RHYS DAVIES is a very good writer who in a long life has never had the public recognition he deserves. One hopes that these

chapters of autobiography will help to repair the omission and serve to remind people that he is among the best short story writers of our time. Indeed, they have the same qualities of freshness and compassion that are revealed in his stories; the difference is that here it is his own experiences which Mr. Davies recounts, only he sees them with very much the same eye as he turns upon those of others.

*Print of a Hare's Foot* tells the story of Mr. Davies' early life, first in childhood and youth in one of the most remote outposts of the Rhondda at the beginning of this century, and later as a young man on the threshold of a literary career in London. Mr. Davies is an old man now, but one has the sense that he still sees with a boy's clear vision. Many people before him have attempted to describe the extraordinary, one is tempted to say unique, society that until recently existed in the mining valleys of South Wales; no one, I think, has brought it to life quite so vividly as Mr. Davies does here.

It was in many ways a savage and violent society, marked by the scars of some of the harshest industrial conflicts this country has ever known. Yet its harshness was tempered by the dignity and warmth, a sense of shared humanity, which the South Wales miner never lost in good times as in bad. It was also, in one of its aspects, an almost claustrophobically closed society; the strange landscape of the South Wales mining valleys, in which the rural and the industrial combine so dramatically, was the background to a peculiarly close and intimate social life in which religion, beer, song, rugby football, socialism and whippets all had their part to play. Yet, in another aspect, it was a society which was open to all the world; the valleys, the grimy streams that ran down them, the coal that came out of their bowels, the tram-line following the course of the single village street of the Rhondda, all made their way down to the docks and ships of Cardiff, and through them made their presence felt at the ends of the world. The Rhondda was a major factor in the industrialisation of the planet; and in the same way the miners' struggle for a life which recognised his human dignity made him a participant, and a leader, in a world-wide conflict.

MR. DAVIES' ACCOUNT of his childhood and youth in this exotic society has a wonderful spontaneity; every detail in it is vivid, exact, authentic, and never blurred by overemphasis or exaggeration. He has the seeing eye of the born writer, but what comes as a surprise is that he preserves the same simplicity and clarity of vision in the very different world of literary London in the 1920s; the scene here is, for most

people, a much more familiar one, but in Mr. Davies' description, we see it as he saw it himself, with the eyes of a young man for whom it was an almost total contrast to anything he had known before.

In one respect, also, these later chapters constitute an important contribution to literary history. In 1928, the windfall of a publisher's advance, "a sweet lump of money properly deposited in a bank," enabled Mr. Davies to satisfy an ambition to make a long stay in the South of France and there one day in Nice he received the following letter from Bandol:

*Dear Rhys Davies,*

Mr. Lahr sent me your address. Would you care to come here and be my guest in this small and inexpensive hotel for a few days? Bandol is about 20 minutes on the Marseilles side of Toulon; 20 minutes from Toulon. My wife and I would both be pleased if you come. I'm not quite sure how long we shall stay here—but anyhow ten days.

*Sincerely,*

D. H. LAWRENCE

Mr. Davies' account of his stay with Lawrence was originally published in *Horizon*, but one is grateful for having it here in more permanent form. Lawrence was then a dying man, living a life of peripatetic exile which, however, did not protect him, or his paintings, poems, novels from the persecution of the British censorship. Both his physical illness and the intense suffering caused him by his estrangement from England made him moody, unreasonable, cantankerous; yet they did nothing to impair the force and attraction of his personality.

I mused over his extraordinary attraction as a person to look at. There was something of both a bird and a lizard about him—light and winging, no flesh hampering him. Yet the dark torrents of hatreds and teeming awareness in that frail figure! The curious bearded man on the *plage* was somehow electrically dangerous; he bore a high voltage of life.

Mr. Davies' account of Lawrence at the end of his life is one of the most sympathetic and understanding portraits of a man of genius ever written; no wonder Cyril Connolly was excited when he received the manuscript at *Horizon*. But it is a tribute to Mr. Davies' own book that it makes it entirely understandable to us that, if he liked Lawrence, so also Lawrence liked him.

Goronwy Rees



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## POINTS OF THE COMPASS

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### Return to Cairo

*By Ibn el-Assal*

THE FIRST IMPRESSION that one gets returning to Egypt after an absence of some time is unmistakably one of greater freedom. In the past, criticism of the régime tended to be furtive, the speaker looking around carefully and making sure who was within earshot before he spoke. Now it is much more open. People tell jokes or make explicit criticisms even of the President at dinner parties and in public places without bothering to look around and see who is there. Only the presence of foreign correspondents seems on occasion to inhibit the expression of unorthodox views. Otherwise criticism is not only more outspoken but is much more violent. Whereas previously it tended to be directed against the régime as such rather than against Nasser in person, it is now both more vicious and more personal in tone. A line which was familiar at an earlier time, as also in other dictatorial régimes past and present—that the leader was good but the men around him evil—is no longer heard. Criticism of Nasser has become much more direct, and reflects even on his personal integrity. He is accused of favouring his family and allowing them to acquire positions of wealth, power, and above all comfort. During the first few weeks of my stay in Egypt I heard only one person speak well of Nasser and of the régime, and he was an Englishman. Egyptians were either silent or hostile.

In view of this overwhelming attitude of dissatisfaction and disapproval, I was puzzled by the dramatic events following Nasser's resignation in June 1967, and the apparently unanimous desire of the Egyptians or at least of the people of Cairo to have him back. I put this question to a number of friends, whose answers fell

broadly into two groups. One school of thought was that the whole thing was a pre-arranged comedy, organised by the police or the Arab Socialist Union—there were various nominees for the role of producer. Another view was expressed by a friend who put it this way: "When we heard the news of his resignation, our immediate reaction was that after having got the country into such a mess, he couldn't just walk out and leave it for someone else to clear up. What the crowds were in effect saying to him was 'You got us into this. Now you get us out of it.' . . ."

The greater degree of outspokenness is, however, misleading and does not really mean any greater freedom. On the contrary, the relaxation of pressure on the population in general is an excellent example of the skill of the régime in political manipulation—perhaps the only political skill which they possess to any degree. While, wisely, they are allowing people to talk more freely, they are allowing them far less scope to do anything about it. The means for the detection and suppression of *organised* opposition are much more effective. It is perhaps more striking and more significant that while there is more freedom in the country as a whole there is far less freedom within the ruling group. Whereas previously there was quite considerable scope for argument and criticism in Nasser's immediate circle, this has now ceased. The President now has his hands directly on the levers of power. Those who disagree with him or oppose his policies in any way, still more those who might conceivably form the nucleus of any kind of opposition group, have been systematically eliminated from positions of authority. They have not as yet been eliminated in any further sense but are still living peacefully in Cairo. They appear, however, to be under strict observation.

IN THE COMPARATIVE GENTLENESS with which opponents within the régime are treated, Egypt is still some distance from being a totalitarianism of the Central or East European type. The same kind of gap can be seen as between "Arab socialism" and the East European variety. Under Arab socialism as practised and applied in Egypt, the rich have been deprived of their riches, but apparently not of their ability to accumulate new riches. This has produced some curious results. Many former wealthy families whose wealth was in land or industry, finding themselves deprived of their former assets, have found new ways of using their talents. A number of them have invested what little remained of their money in such enterprises as night-clubs and restaurants, of which a surprising number

THE AUTHOR of this article recently returned to Egypt from North America. He has preferred to use a pseudonym.

have been established in Cairo in recent years. These are highly profitable institutions, and have the great merit of not figuring in the national development plans. They are patronised by wealthy Arabs from oil-rich countries such as Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait, who come with vast sums of money to spend. They are also patronised to some extent by what is left of the Egyptian middle and upper class. Wealth acquired by means of night-clubs and restaurants has several advantages from the point of view of defending oneself against taxation and sequestration—the two principal menaces of the Arab socialist programme. In fact, those who make money in this and other ways seem to take good care not to accumulate any kind of visible capital, but to spend or remove their profits as quickly and as completely as possible. This means that a considerable amount of money is in very rapid circulation, inducing a rather febrile and specious prosperity in certain circles. It also means of course that nothing is being built up, and that the prospects of the economic future of the country are becoming steadily dimmer.

MANY STORIES ARE TOLD about the sequestration administration. Their general purport is to show it as prejudiced and incompetent. Both charges are, alas, easy to prove. Sequestration orders were for long directed principally against foreign and minority-owned assets. The tripartite aggression in 1956 justified the sequestration of British, French, and Jewish (not Israeli—obviously there were none) assets. Belgian misdeeds in the Congo furnished the occasion for the seizure (as a matter of African solidarity) of Belgian property in Egypt. Land reform required the sequestration of land-holdings above the permitted maximum—and so towards a larger and more general programme of nationalisation. Sequestered properties were not, however, simply confiscated. The previous owners retained a form of title, and in some cases received a monthly allowance from the sequestration authorities. Some of them qualified for other benefits. The large-scale dismissals of servants and other employees by suddenly impoverished plutocrats created distress and discontent. The authorities responded by arranging for these servants to stay at their posts, and draw their pay from the sequestration office. The former owners thus kept their servants, but with the uneasy knowledge that these were now paid by and answerable to another authority. In a few cases owners were able to obtain the annulment of the sequestration orders and the return of their property—except that usually there was nothing left to return. This was not

due to corruption but to the apparently inevitable inefficiency of such arrangements.

### *The Crisis of National Identity*

NOBODY SEEMS TO HAVE a good word to say for Arab socialism. Commercial, professional, and middle class elements bring against it the usual complaints which are brought against socialism in Western countries. Left-wingers dismiss Arab socialism with contempt as a half-hearted and inefficient compromise which has the merits neither of socialism nor of capitalism. According to them the only way to solve the economic problems of Egypt is to introduce "real" or "scientific" socialism—i.e., the real thing as practised in Eastern Europe. According to this view Arab socialism is a mere sham—an ideological justification for the confiscation of Egyptian Moslem property when the supply of non-Egyptian and non-Moslem property for confiscation has run out. It has "nothing to do" with socialism in any real sense. The more pessimistic say that Arab socialism means socialism run by Arabs—and whatever kind of socialism they adopt in theory it will be "Arab socialism" when they put it into effect. In this respect Arab socialism will be the same as Arab democracy, Arab liberalism, and Arab capitalism.

I found this kind of rather neurotic self-criticism very frequent. It can be discerned for example in the political joke—that standard expression of dissent in autocracies. But whereas the political joke in Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia tended to be directed against the leader or against the régime, in Egypt it is as often as not directed against the Egyptian nation itself. It is not uncommon to find the expression of extreme nationalist views coupled with an almost nihilistic rejection of the Egyptian nation as incapable of anything at all.

The Egyptian nation? This raises another and interesting question. For a long time now the Egyptians have been suffering from what American psychologists and literary critics call "a crisis of identity." Are they Egyptians or are they Arabs? In the past they were quite happy to be simply Moslems or Copts, without worrying about a national designation. But in the modern world this is no longer adequate. There have been periods when they identified themselves—at least politically—as Egyptians, as inhabitants and citizens of a country called Egypt, which should find its political expression in an Egyptian state. During that period Egyptian intellectuals were inclined to argue that the fact that they spoke Arabic did not make them



Arabs, any more than Mexicans were Spaniards or Americans were Englishmen. They expressed attitudes varying from sympathy to contempt for the Arabs of the East, but clearly differentiated themselves from them. They were Egyptians—the proud and legitimate heirs of the ancient glories of Pharaonic Egypt.

At other times they identified themselves as Arabs rather than Egyptians, and found their past heroes in the Arab caliphs rather than in the Egyptian Pharaohs. During the last fifteen years or more, the *Arab* rather than the *Egyptian* line has been dominant. It found its highest expression in the creation (in 1958) of the United Arab Republic after the union with Syria, and in the retention of that title by Egypt alone even after the Syrian secession. During this period even the very name of "Egypt" was wiped off the map. I was told that in elementary schools the history primers dealing with the ancient period spoke not of ancient Egypt but of "the ancient history of the southern region of the United Arab Republic." I do not know whether this is literally true, but it is not untypical of the attitudes that were current at that time. "Egyptianism" as distinct from "Arabism" was regarded as sectional and sectarian or, even worse, as an expression of Coptic influence. This was a damaging accusation.

DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS there has been a considerable revival of Egyptian as distinct from Arab identity. The war against Israel, the subsequent defeat, and the invasion by Israel of Egyptian territory helped to concentrate Egyptian feelings rather more powerfully on their own native land. With the enemy on the Canal and within gunshot of the Delta, it was Egypt herself that seemed to be threatened, and there were many Egyptians who began to ask how this came about. Many Egyptians still express loyalty to the Arab ideal and insist on the importance of the Arab world for Egypt—sometimes in political terms, sometimes more nakedly in economic terms (e.g., on the lines that the Arab world forms the natural economic hinterland of the rising Egyptian industry, or that Egypt requires the oil revenues which Arabia gets but does not know how to use). Others have adopted a rather more cynical view of Arab unity. Time and time again I heard people cursing the Syrians—"They got us into this and then they didn't fire a shot." This is perhaps not quite fair as a description of the Syrian role of the events of May and June 1967, but it is not altogether wrong.

One hears the same kind of opinions expressed regarding the Palestinians, who are believed to have got the Egyptians into a mess and done

nothing to help themselves. It is curious that the Palestinian Arab guerrilla organisations, whose emergence as a new and powerful factor in Arab and Middle Eastern affairs occupies so much attention in the West, receive far less among Egyptians. During several weeks in Egypt and many conversations with many Egyptians, I only heard the Palestine guerrillas described once as a new and significant factor, and that was by a young man who was educated in England and returns to that country very frequently. I had the distinct impression that he derived his opinions from the B.B.C. and the *Observer* rather than from any local sources.

There had been earlier setbacks to the cause of Arabism in Egypt—such as the brief and ill-fated union with Syria, and the bloody and costly failure in the Yemen. These, however, worked both ways. The union with Syria, while it lasted, showed some of the advantages which such associations could bring to important groups of Egyptians, many of whom held positions of power and profit in the "northern region." Even the war in the Yemen was not without its rewards. Egyptian troops were rotated fairly rapidly, and many found the opportunity in Arabia, in the usual manner of armies abroad, to buy and sell their way to moderate and relative wealth. Many a Cairo taxi-driver acquired his vehicle with money brought back from the Yemen.

The defeat in 1967 was another matter. This time the defeat was immediate and overwhelming. It brought no gains to anyone—and it brought the enemy right into Egypt. In the inevitable search for scapegoats, "Our Arab Brothers," for whom Egypt had made such sacrifices and from whom Egypt had received so little help, were obvious candidates.

### "Egyptianism" v. "Arabism"

THIS DISCUSSION OF THE NATURE and identity of the country—Egyptian or Arab—is one of the most hotly debated themes at the present time. The Copts, as one might expect, are almost solidly in favour of an Egyptian rather than an Arab identity, and indeed opponents of this point of view tend to dismiss it as a Coptic aberration, feeling that this is in itself sufficient to discredit it. It is, however, by no means limited to Copts. There are many Egyptians who begin to think once again in terms of an *Egyptian patriotism* rather than a Pan-Arab nationalism and to argue, not without some show of justification, that "Arabism" has brought many troubles and no gains to Egypt.

The Egyptian press remains of course strictly

controlled and for the most part state-owned, but a careful reading reveals some of the problems and differences of opinion which agitate people. The question of Egyptian or Arab identity is a good example. The official line is still unremittingly "Arab," and any formal opposition to this would be impossible in the public media. The issue, however, finds expression in indirect form. During a recent conference held under the auspices of the Egyptian government to commemorate the thousandth anniversary of the foundation of the city of Cairo, a Soviet scholar—of all people!—submitted a paper in which he argued that the name "Cairo" is not, as everyone has hitherto thought, of Arab derivation, but goes back to an ancient Egyptian name. This paper was reported at some length in the official daily newspaper *Al-Ahram*. This was followed by a lively controversy which ran for several weeks and attracted a great deal of attention. Quite obviously the contributors and readers of the newspaper were not working themselves into a passion over so obscure an issue as the etymology of the name "Cairo." What really interested them was the question whether they were Egyptians or Arabs, whether their Egyptian or Arab loyalty was supreme. The dispute on etymology was an argument on this question in disguise. The point was nicely summed up by an Egyptian minded intellectual.

"I have heard of a woman pretending to be younger than she is," he said, "but not a civilisation. Our civilisation is 5,000 years old—and we invite the world to celebrate our 1,000th birthday! . . ."

There is one other field in which criticism—social and moral rather than political—appears in print, and that is in fiction. Egyptian novelists and short-story writers—and there are some very good ones working in Egypt today—present, for those who can appreciate it, a vivid picture of the quiet desperation of modern Egyptian life. It is perhaps fortunate that censors rarely understand literature.

OTHER QUESTIONS of great public concern can be discerned dimly as through a glass in the arguments and discussions in the Cairo daily newspapers. The different factions do not put forward their views openly, but these can to some extent be detected through the accusations which groups make against one another. From this and other evidence one gathers the impression that there are within the ruling *élite* three main tendencies at the moment. In the centre there are the Nasserists *tout court*, those who support the President whatever he does, and have no political ideology of any kind other than such support. To the right of these there is the group

of those who are alarmed at the too great influence which the Russians are acquiring in the country, and who feel that a more genuinely neutral policy would be desirable. To the extent that these desire to resume some sort of dialogue with the West, they might be described as "pro-Western"—but hardly more than that. On the other side, there are those who believe that Arab Socialism having failed, real or scientific Socialism must be tried. They would wish to collectivise or nationalise the economy of the country as a whole and apply the same sort of methods as have been applied in Eastern Europe. This would, of course, inevitably mean very much closer association with the Soviet Union—a consequence which is accepted with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Members of either one of these groups would have a good chance of seizing power if Nasser should fall.

Apart from these there are also the Muslim Brothers, who are of course not represented in the ruling group at any level, but who have very powerful and widespread support in the country as a whole. Their chances would come only if the régime is completely destroyed—a contingency which seems unlikely at the present time. A man high in the counsels of the Muslim Brothers was quoted to me as saying "I wish that the Israelis would really conquer Cairo—that would make our task much easier." I can see the logic of this rather strange pronouncement.

ATTITUDES TO THE NATION and to the régime have of course a considerable bearing on the vexed problem of Israel. If the conflict is between a country called Israel and a country called Egypt, then the problem is much nearer to solution. Between Israel as Israel and Egypt as Egypt, there is no really fundamental problem at issue, and it should not be difficult to reach some sort of compromise. I found Egyptians who argued precisely along these lines. Another thing that struck me is that the passion against Israel and against the Jews which one has been led to expect from international press reports is usually lacking, or at least is no greater (and probably less) than before. There is of course a very strong feeling of anxiety at the danger which threatens the very heart of Egypt, and a great feeling of indignation. This indignation is not directed exclusively against the enemy. Often, it is directed against those, in Egypt and elsewhere, who got them into this trouble and who are now preventing them from getting out of it. One of the banners carried by student demonstrators last November read: "FORWARD, MOSHE DAYAN!" This was not of course an expression of pro-Israeli sentiments—

though it was used by the prosecutors to support the absurd claim that the demonstrations were instigated by "Israeli agents." The rhetorical point that the student demonstrators were making is one often heard in conversation—that "any change," even an Israeli occupation, would be better than the present régime.

A picture that is often presented abroad is of Nasser as a moderate, holding back—with increasing difficulty—an infuriated Egyptian nation that is hell-bent for war. My own impression is the exact opposite—of a peaceable and weary people lashed and dragged by their leaders. The average Egyptian, young and old, is heartily sick of adventure and war. He asks nothing better than peace, even with Israel, on terms that are reasonable and honourable for Egypt. It is the régime which needs a state of war and a war-psychosis, with an endless series of incidents and crises, in order to maintain its rule over a reluctant country. Nasser himself is too heavily committed to pan-Arabism and the struggle against Israel to make peace even if he wants to—and the appearances are that he doesn't. There is in Egypt a great fear of the unknown, and even Nasser's bitterest critics sometime express anxiety about what might happen after the fall. Even in France, incomparably more stable and less troubled than Egypt, there were similar misgivings before the departure of de Gaulle. How much more so the Egyptians, with their immense and manifold problems. A state of war increases their anxiety, and reinforces their unwillingness to risk a change. A state of peace would make the retention of Nasser less necessary, and make his rule less bearable.

Nasser himself would prefer a state of war, short of actual war. His problem is to restrain two groups who think otherwise—on the one hand, those who would like to make peace on "Egyptian terms," *i.e.* securing the evacuation of Egyptian territory and leaving the Arabs in the East to arrange their own affairs; on the other, the war party—the soldiers who are determined to wipe out the disgrace to Egyptian arms and honour, and the politicians who are irrevocably committed to "the Arab cause." It is by no means unlikely that a régime might emerge after him, or even a successor in the same régime, which is much more likely, who would be able to take a different point of view. One should not underrate the possibilities of rapid change of mood and direction in Egyptian politics.

The demand for the union of Egypt and the Sudan—the unity of the Nile valley—was one of the basic demands of Egyptian patriots for seventy years. King Farouk actually went so far as to proclaim himself King of Egypt and the

Sudan, thus putting himself into a position from which he could not retreat on this subject. Yet the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of a new régime freed the Egyptian government from this embarrassing title and claim and made it possible to accept and recognise the independent nation which had meanwhile emerged in the Sudan. The long standing Egyptian demand for the union of Egypt and the Sudan was dropped—and the astonishing thing was that there was practically no objection in Egypt! The Egyptian interest in the Sudan is older and better grounded in reality than the Egyptian interest in Palestine. Although the Palestine issue has been embittered by three wars, it is by no means inconceivable that an Egyptian régime or ruler might emerge which would be prepared to cut its losses in Palestine in the same way as Neguib and Nasser did in the Sudan. In such a case there would no doubt be political opposition in Egypt, but I doubt if it would seriously incommode a determined Egyptian government. The problem of a settlement between Israel and her genuinely Arab neighbours in the East is of course quite another matter and would be very much more difficult—though on the other hand it is not easy to see what they could do once the great prop of Egyptian support is removed.

FOREIGN NEWSPAPERS can be obtained in Cairo—though occasional pages or even whole issues may be missing. They are however difficult and troublesome to get, and while I was there I relied on the local newspapers. These present a somewhat curious view of the world. One recognises the familiar outlines of places and people and events, but they appear in a strange and rather distorted form—with the perspective and realism of a medieval Islamic miniature. They are, so to speak, at some distance from reality and at a slant to it, and include a fair measure of pure fantasy. To begin with, I was able after my arrival to recognise the events and the situations to which newspaper articles and news items referred and to make the necessary adjustments. But after spending a little while in the country, I found my connection with reality slowly slipping. I began to feel myself much more influenced and affected by what I was reading, and unconsciously yielding to the Western-induced habit of believing that what one finds in print in a newspaper must have some sort of foundation of truth. One may doubt, one may feel that there is exaggeration, misrepresentation, or distortion, but one stops short of rejecting the entire story as a fabrication from start to finish.

There were several items I accepted as truth because I had read them in the newspapers, and I did not discover until some time later that they were the purest invention.

ONE OF THE ACCUSATIONS commonly brought against the régime is that it had encouraged "immorality," or to put it in another way, that its activities have led to a breakdown of the old high Islamic moral standards. As usual, morality means primarily sexual morality, but not exclusively. Standards of honour among craftsmen, workmen, artisans, shopkeepers, etc. were once very high—in spite of the common Western belief to the contrary. They are now declining, to something more closely approximating a tourist or soldier's view of the Egyptians. This is a source of reproach. Even more sensitive is the sexual issue. In the new night-clubs and restaurants a visitor may see an astonishing sight. Young men and young girls sit together, publicly indulging in what the Americans call "heavy necking." This is not entirely new—what is new is that the girls are no longer professionals of vaguely South East European extraction but young Egyptian Moslem girls of what I might perhaps be excused for calling good family. Such conduct would have been inconceivable up to a few years ago in what, despite all the social and political changes, remained a conservative society in its moral and religious aspects. It is now taking place on a wide scale, and is deeply shocking to those who still believe in the old standards and the old way of life. This may yet prove to be one of the most serious grievances against the régime.

### The Minorities

ONE OF THE SADDER CHANGES that have happened in Egypt is the virtual destruction of the minority communities. It is often said that the Egyptian Jewish community has been a casualty of the Arab-Israel struggle. In a sense this is true—but it is not unlikely that the Egyptian Jewish community would have suffered the same fate even had there been no Arab-Israel struggle. The Jews in Egypt were by no means the only minority. There were also some 70,000 Greeks, 50,000 Italians, and smaller groups of Levantine Christians, Cypriots, Maltese, Armenians and others, many of them established in the country for generations. All these have suffered the same fate. Without actually being driven from the country, they have been induced to leave by the steadily increasing pressure of Egyptian Moslem nationalism, which made it very difficult for members

of foreign communities or even minority religious communities to make a livelihood. The Greeks, the Italians and the rest have gone home, and the 65,000 Jews who once lived in Egypt are now reduced to barely 3,000. Theoretically, the Jews, who had been in the country for thousands of years, were an Egyptian religious minority like the Copts, not a foreign minority like the Greeks and Italians. But in fact this distinction was blurred. The poorer Jews were indeed genuinely Egyptian—poor, sick and down-trodden. The upper-class Jews, however, were mainly foreign by origin or adoption, and preserved their foreign language, culture, and citizenship. While the poor Jews spoke Arabic, the rich Jews usually spoke French or Italian, and were in consequence seen as part of the privileged alien domination. When the end came, they shared the fate of other foreigners in Egypt—but worse, because of the conflict with Israel.

Egyptians react rather angrily to any suggestion of "anti-Semitism." Sometimes they produce the rather illiterate argument that they cannot be anti-Semitic because they are themselves Semites. This is, of course, absurd. Egyptians and other Arabs are, however, justified in disclaiming the kind of hostility to the Jews which is to be found in Christendom. This is a Euro-American rather than an Afro-Asian phenomenon, and has no real equivalent in the lands of Islam.

Nevertheless, it is not surprising that the impression of Arab and Egyptian anti-Semitism should have got around. A visit to the book-shops of Cairo, even to the kerb-side kiosks, shows them to be full of the most virulent anti-Semitic literature, much if not most of it translated or adapted from European works. Arabic translations of the famous "*Protocols of the Elders of Zion*" are to be found everywhere, and are quoted and distributed by the government in its various propaganda and information agencies. Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, in Arabic, is another widely distributed classic. There is an enormous literature of books dealing with Zionism and Israel—natural and reasonable enough. Many of them, however, begin and conclude with statements about the wickedness of the Jews as such and the Jewish conspiracy against the human race, for which they rely very heavily on the "*Protocols*" and other European anti-Jewish literature. The choicer specimens include charges that the Jews use Christian and/or Moslem blood for religious ceremonies, were responsible for both World Wars as well as numerous earlier troubles, are trying to dominate the world by secret conspiratorial means, and—a recurring theme—thoroughly deserve the hatred and persecution

which they have throughout their history attracted to themselves. This sometimes leads to the exoneration of Hitler and Eichmann, who are presented as martyrs in a worthy cause.

Even serious authors go in for this kind of theory. A well-known professor of political science, in a widely-read book on Zionism, quotes Hitler in support of the authenticity of the "*Protocols*," which (he argues), is in any case demonstrated by the whole course of modern history; he goes on to argue that the study of what Hitler wrote about "World Zionism" is a vital necessity for the Arabs after what happened in 1948. Another, among many, is a distinguished diplomat, Ahmad Farrag Tayeh, who was Egyptian consul-general in Jerusalem during the final stages of the Palestine mandate, Minister to Jordan in 1951-52, and foreign minister after the revolution. This gentleman wrote an extremely important book describing what he saw in 1947 and 1948. His book begins with an introductory chapter based on the "*Protocols*" and French anti-Semitic tracts, on the Jewish plot to corrupt and rule mankind and their secret domination of the Anglo-Saxon countries. Most other books dealing with Israel, Zionism, or the Jews—and there are literally hundreds of them—bear to a greater or lesser extent in the same direction. Similar views are expressed in newspaper and magazine articles, and in radio and television programmes.

THIS GENERAL IMPRESSION of "anti-Semitism" which one gathers from literature and journalism is reinforced if one considers some further factors, for example the presence of large numbers of Nazi refugees, many of them now disguised under Arab names. Most of them live in Meadi, once the favourite suburb of British administrators and officials in Egypt. The former English club at Meadi is now largely frequented by Germans of this and other kinds. It is a strange irony.

Yet in spite of this, in spite of the anti-Semitic literature, the Nazi advisers and the destruction of the Jewish community, the observer would be wrong in ascribing racial anti-Semitism to the Egyptians. Foreign visitors, accustomed to the anti-Semitism of Europe and North America, expect to find a physical and personal rejection of Jews. There is none, not even among the authors and translators of anti-Semitic propagandist works. The régime has no doubt tried very hard—but it has failed. From the Egyptians in general, and what is more important from those Jews themselves who still remain in Egypt, I was assured again and again that "there is no real hostility." Action taken against the Jews in Egypt is purely and entirely the work of the régime and does not rest on any

real popular feeling. It is astonishing to what extent the flood of hostile propaganda in books, newspapers, magazines, radio and television has failed to penetrate the Egyptian and to affect his basically kindly and tolerant attitude. The Egyptian is capable of violence in moments of passion and anger, but he is at root a humane and easy-going sort of person. It is difficult, for example, to see Egyptians engaging in the kind of blood-bath that has characterised changes of régimes in Iraq in recent years, or enjoying the public hangings which appear to be the most favoured spectacle in that country.

There remains, however, the genuinely difficult situation of the few thousand Jews who are still in Egypt. There is a certain irony, too, in that situation. During the last twenty years or more most of the Jewish community of Egypt have left. Some have settled in Israel, most have gone to Europe and the Americas. Those who have remained are the most authentically Egyptian of all. These are the poor Jews from the old Cairo ghettos, who still wear the *galabiya*, who speak nothing but Arabic, and who cannot conceive of life in any other place. Their life has always been hard and poor—the discrimination now levelled against them by the régime makes only a marginal difference. There have been other troubles in the past, they say, "and God has helped and they have gone"; these, too, will no doubt go in time. During the last two years the authorities have arrested several hundred adult male Jews, for no apparent reason; at least, no charges were ever preferred and no trials ever held. The reason given in statements abroad was that these were defaulters from military service. This is palpably untrue, since Jews are never permitted to serve in the armed forces, let alone required to do so.

Several hundred Jewish heads of families were detained at the Toura prison near Cairo. After a while arrangements were made to release them in small batches, but this ceased after the death of General Riyad and the wave of indignation that followed it. The remaining prisoners, between 300 and 400 of them, were transferred to another prison near the Barrage, where they are being kept in conditions of great hardship. Those Jews who remain at large do not appear to be subject to any kind of restraint or persecution. They are allowed to follow their professions, and to move freely around the country. They are not, however, allowed to leave.

AT THE PRESENT TIME it is fashionable in Arab countries—no doubt under Soviet influence—to use "Nazi" as a term of abuse. This has not always been so in the past, and even

now many Nasserists make no secret of their wartime sympathies for Nazi Germany. Anwar el-Sadat in his autobiography has spoken of his role in organising a group in Cairo to help German spies. President Nasser himself, in his recent interview (2 March 1969) with the *New York Times*, when asked who was the man who had influenced him most, named General Aziz Ali el-Masri. General Aziz Ali el-Masri was the leader of the group of dissident officers to which Nasser and his friends belonged. He was also strongly pro-German, and in touch with Hitler's command. At one point arrangements were made to send a German plane to fetch him. Fortunately or unfortunately, depending on one's point of view, the plot was discovered in time and the General was arrested. Many others played a similar role and are not averse to talking about it. Generally speaking this pro-Nazism was pro-German and anti-British rather than connected with Jews or Zionism as such. At that time they were concerned with "the freedom of Egypt," and they naively believed that this was the way to obtain it. There were some, however, who seem to have gone a little further, and these are occasionally embarrassing to their present-day friends and associates.

Last year the Arab Socialist Union held a meeting in Cairo in order to mobilise international support from Left-wing elements in favour of the Arab cause. Quite a number of Leftists (both new and old) were present, including several Jews. At the final plenary session, to which resolutions were submitted from the various meetings, there was an untoward incident. One of the resolutions proclaimed the support of the meeting for all progressive movements wherever they might be, including Israel. The Syrian representative objected to the last two words "including Israel" on the grounds that since Israel was by definition aggressive, since its very existence constituted an aggression, to talk of progressive elements inside Israel was a contradiction in terms. The Chairman, a self-proclaimed wartime Nazi sympathiser now high in the councils of the Arab Socialist Union, appeared to agree, and summarily deleted the offending words. Among those who tried to raise their voices in protest was a European Jewish Marxist, who had come, so he explained, out of progressive solidarity with the Arab cause, and therefore deplored the spirit behind this change. The Chairman would not allow him to speak, and gave his reasons, with some vigour. He knew, he said, why "this Jew" had come; he knew what "this Jew's" real purpose was, and he would not let "this Jew" have his way. These remarks were of course made in Arabic and it

is not known whether they were translated for the benefit of "this Jew" and other Marxist Jewish visitors.

**B**OTH JEWS AND COPTS, during the period of Western cultural domination, began to give their sons European first names; Moslems did not. An Egyptian with a given name like "Louis" or "George" might be either a Jew or a Copt. If the latter, he may need from time to time to prove his Coptic identity—usually by producing a certificate from a Coptic priest. This has the advantage of proving that he is not a Jew; it has the corresponding disadvantage of proving that he is not a Moslem.

THE POSITION OF THE COPTS continues to be curiously anomalous. The Copts are native and Arabic-speaking. They are undoubtedly the most authentically Egyptian of all the inhabitants of the country. They are Christians—but of an Egyptian national church which existed before the coming of the Arabs or Islam. Of all the inhabitants of Egypt they alone can claim to be the authentic descendants of ancient Egyptians, unmixed with Arab or Turkish or Circassian or Mamluk blood. While remaining Christian they did, however, adopt the Arabic language and to this extent became incorporated in the new identity which Islam imposed on the country. They have been rather luke-warm on the subject of "Arabism," still more so of pan-Arabism. In the old order which was officially based on Islam, the Copts had a recognised and accepted place as a tolerated minority. In the new order based on nationality, they should have been accepted as full equals—but they never really were. Their position was rather weakened during the period of the British occupation, when as Christians they enjoyed a certain favour from the occupying power to whom they were able in various ways to make themselves useful. That no doubt is the reason why anti-British attacks during the occupation and, more recently, during the struggle for the evacuation of the Suez Canal Zone, were not infrequently accompanied by campaigns against the Copts as well. At the present time the régime theoretically maintains the position that the Copts are fellow-citizens and complete equals, but it is not always so in practice. The Copts cannot really complain of any genuine persecution—though this does not stop some of them from doing so. There is, however, a very definite ceiling to their advancement in government service of any kind—and in the socialist society of the present time the term government service embraces an ever wider range of activities. Some Copts complain with equal vigour

of what they regard as the neurotic tendency of their co-religionists to see anti-Coptic discrimination where there is none, and to attribute their own personal setbacks to prejudice against the group to which they belong. The real problem is one of insecurity. The Copts, particularly but not only the middle and upper classes and those with any kind of professional ambitions, do not feel at ease in modern Egypt.

This is one of the factors which has led to an entirely new phenomenon in Egyptian life—emigration. For hundreds and indeed thousands of years Egypt has been a country of *immigration* not of emigration. The hospitable land and people of Egypt, the wealth of the Nile valley, have in ancient, medieval and modern times attracted immigrants from many other countries who have come to Egypt, settled there, and contributed to its growth and development. Egyptians themselves have never shown the slightest inclination to leave their country, even in times of real poverty and distress. Perhaps the most striking change the present régime has introduced in Egypt is in this respect—there is no immigration but, on the contrary, there is now considerable emigration. As a local wit put it, "Nasser began by wiping the name of Egypt off the map—now he is getting rid of the Egyptians too. . . ." Many thousands are already reported to be in Canada, where they have joined the Syrian, Lebanese, and other Christian émigrés from the Arab world. This represents a very significant development, for such a group constitutes a real bridgehead, a sufficient number of brothers, uncles, cousins, etc., to welcome a very much larger number. Egyptians are also going to other countries which are willing to receive them. Copts form a substantial proportion of the emigrants, but by no means the whole. Even Moslem Egyptians are now leaving Egypt and settling in countries overseas. The régime, after some initial reluctance, has apparently decided to allow this emigration. From its point of view it has the merit of siphoning off active and discontented elements who might otherwise cause trouble at home. Also it has, incidentally, the effect of draining away the most active and enterprising and often the best qualified elements in the country. This constitutes a permanent and perhaps irreparable loss. From the official point of view, however, the departure of dissident elements is a gain which far outweighs the loss of qualified elements.

### Moscow to Cairo

THE COMMUNISTS are once again very much in evidence in Cairo. At one time they were rather severely repressed and a num-

ber of them were sent to a special concentration camp in the desert, where it is understood that they were very badly treated. Later they were released and a curious episode followed. According to the version that was put about, the Egyptian Communist Party had a meeting at which it agreed that in the present state of Egypt's development, a Communist Party was not required. It was accordingly decided that the party should be dissolved and that its members should join the Arab Socialist Union as individuals and work for the accomplishment of socialism in this way. It was noted after this that a number of Communists were appointed to positions of some influence and power, especially in the mass media. They can be heard and read almost daily on radio, TV, and in the main daily and weekly papers. The suspicion is general (and probably justified) that this was part of a deal imposed upon Nasser by his Russian friends—the release of the Communists and their appointment to certain positions, in return for the formal dissolution of the Party and support of the régime.

These Communists are a rather interesting lot. Generally speaking—though there are exceptions, especially in the universities—they are among the most intelligent, educated, and cultivated people that one meets in Egypt. They are also purposeful and determined. Often they are the sons and daughters of the great families in the past, a surprising proportion of them being the offspring of Turco-Circassian Pashas. Many of them were educated in French schools, often mission schools, and in French universities, where they acquired a characteristic French intellectualism and *gauchisme*. At the present time most of those who are still in Egypt seem to be fairly pro-Muscovite; the "Pekingese" have either gone into hiding or into exile. There are also quite a number who remain pro-Communist but with a certain detachment from Moscow (after the events in Czechoslovakia). Egyptian acceptance of the Russian action in Czechoslovakia is by no means as unanimous as one might gather from reading the press and listening to the radio.

Another place where Communist influence can be seen is in the bookshops. The selections of books on current affairs, politics, and history show a much wider range than in the past. A few years ago, one would have found books on Egypt, on Arab affairs, and of course on Israel and the Jews—but very little else. Now there are books on Asia and on Black Africa, on Europe and on Latin America, as well as on a wide variety of political, social, and economic topics. These present, overwhelmingly, the Muscovite line. It is, of course, anti-imperialist, and imperialism is another name for the West.



Both the vocabulary and the ideology reveal the source. Books on earlier history show a much wider range of ideological commitments, but the modern world can, it would seem, be seen only from one viewpoint. Only on Israel is there some disagreement in the literature. For one school of thought, the enemy is "world Jewry," which cunningly manipulates American politicians; for another the enemy is "American imperialism," of which Israel is the dupe and puppet.

Another interesting feature of the bookshops is the output of literature on the Crusades—which are now a subject of considerable popular interest. They are also a common theme in journalism and even conversation. The attraction is obvious, and both writers and readers find comfort and encouragement in the story of how the Crusaders came from Europe, established themselves by force and aggression, maintained their states for a while, and were finally driven into the sea. The parallels are, so to speak, interchangeable. The Crusaders were early imperialists; the imperialists are modern Crusaders. The Moslem Holy War was yesterday's nationalist struggle; the nationalist struggle is today's Holy War. The Latin kingdom was a Zionist enclave, and Saladin was the Nasser of his time, who overcame the tripartite aggression of the Third Crusade. The end, it follows, must be the same. A European visitor who pointed out that the end was the Mongol invasions aroused some displeasure.

ONE OF THE REALLY STRIKING things that a traveller returning to Egypt after an absence notices is the immense unpopularity of the Russians. The kindest remark I heard about the Russians from anyone was: "We can't do without them—we need them in our present troubles." Even this rather unenthusiastic commendation was rare. Usually what people said about the Russians was very much harsher—though expressed with greater caution and more precaution than criticism of Nasser and his government. People appear to be more afraid of Russian reprisals than of those of their own rulers. Some, such as military officers who had dealings with them, complained of Russian crudity and bullying. Shopkeepers, guides and others complained of their parsimony. In shop after shop, particularly in the quarters dealing with tourist goods, I was told how sad it was that the Americans and British were no longer coming—just a few very rapid French tour parties. "But you have the Russians," I said. This was usually greeted with a storm of abuse. The Russians buy nothing and give nothing.

They even get their cigarettes in their own clubs—and they won't, if they are asked, give anyone a cigarette either. The Russians apparently have not yet learnt that one of the ways in which a foreign presence can make itself tolerable is by spending money—preferably not too lavishly, but noticeably—among local shopkeepers. A more serious complaint about the Russians relates to their growing domination. I was, for example, told again and again by various friends that any member of the Soviet Embassy, even the humblest third Secretary, can call President Nasser at any time of the day and night and see him immediately if he wishes. I do not for a moment believe the truth of this story, which is altogether too improbable; but the mere fact that it is related—frequently and by many people—is in itself a political fact. There is a widespread belief that the Russians need Nasser because he keeps them in Egypt, and Nasser needs the Russians because they keep him in power. This belief does not add to the popularity of either Nasser or the Russians.

### *Of Milk & Beef*

EGYPTIANS IN CONVERSATION tend to make frequent comparisons between the Russians and the Americans, the two great super-powers. They compare the way they behave, their attitudes to Israel and to the Arabs, their cultural, commercial and political methods, their colleges and universities, their ways of dealing with their "clients." The comparisons are by no means always in favour of the Russians, and frequently quite to the contrary. There is a growing tendency, particularly among intellectuals on the one hand and among business people on the other, to recall sadly "the days when Egypt had free and open contact," and exchanges both of goods and ideas, with the West. Russian films are found to be heavy and didactic and quite incredibly boring. Cinemas which show American or West European films are usually crowded; those which show Russian films are almost invariably half-empty. This is a source of quiet satisfaction to many Egyptians and of baffled resentment to Russians. In the same way sophisticated Egyptians, accustomed to the "Western ways," are repelled by the Russian political and even intellectual style, and sigh wistfully for their lost association with the intellectual and cultural life of the Western world.

Another comparison which is frequently made is between the Russians and the British. This is in itself rather sinister, for it means a



comparison between the two powers which at one time or another have dominated and occupied Egypt. Egyptians are painfully aware that the British occupation began in circumstances rather similar to those which prevail now. A hundred years ago the master of Egypt was the Khedive Ismail, an ambitious and extravagant ruler who squandered vast sums on useless display at home and fruitless adventures abroad. To pay the cost, he borrowed money in Europe, and tried to curry favour with his creditors. President Nasser is seen as "the Khedive Ismail of the present time."

WHERE ISMAIL aped West European liberal democracy, Nasser apes East European socialism—and the one resembles its original about as closely as the other. Where Ismail ran up debts with British and French bankers, Nasser runs up debts in Eastern Europe, and the result could well be the same. Already the Soviet Embassy in Cairo is conducting itself in much the same way as the British Residency in the old days, and the Russian Ambassador is behaving, so I was told, "like a High Commissioner." Egyptians are caustic on the subject of Nasser's speeches about the selfless generosity of the Russians and their unwillingness to ask for anything in return for their aid. "Why should they ask for anything," someone remarked, "when they get all they want without asking?" The Russians have not yet established a real military presence, but they are moving rapidly and dangerously in that direction. Egyptians feel that their independence is now in real danger, that they may be seeing the beginnings of a Russian occupation which will be harsher and, above all, longer than the British one. Several friends in conversation drew attention to the fact that the Russian tendency is not merely to exploit but to "eat" the countries into which their troops and experts move. "We shall share the fate of the Tartars and the Uzbeks" was a dreary comment which I heard more than once.

EGYPTIANS LIKE to quote the story of the Arab general Amr Ibn el-As, who conquered Egypt thirteen centuries ago. He expected the Caliph in Arabia to appoint him governor of the country, but the Caliph only offered him the command of the troops in Egypt, while another man became governor. Amr refused this command, in the memorable phrase: "Why should I hold the cow's horns while someone else milks her?" The British, too, came to Egypt for milk. The Russians, it is feared, may want beef.

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## EAST & WEST

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*Letter from Germany*

### Bonn is not Weimar

*By F. R. Allemann*

EVERY TIME there is a crisis in the German Federal Republic fearful spirits paint the fate of the old Weimar Republic on the wall in the darkest colours. When German democracy catches a cold there is no lack of doctors who immediately diagnose an attack of pneumonia like the one that carried off the first German democracy thirty-five years ago.

Burned children fear the fire. The Germans, who in any case have never suffered from an excess of democratic self-confidence, invariably see catastrophe threatening their second republic the moment its democratic machinery ceases to run smoothly. This happened in autumn 1966 when, in the face of a critical aggravation of the financial crisis, Dr. Ludwig Erhard's cabinet broke apart and after a tug-of-war lasting for weeks Erhard was replaced by Dr. Kiesinger and the *kleine* Bonn Coalition by the *grosse*.

During the last two years the same mutterings have started up again. Since the shots fired at Rudi Dutschke drove the most active section of the students out into the streets, unrest and riots have remained a regular feature of the street scene in German university centres. In the Weimar Republic street fighting was the order of the day. If its Bonn successor now goes through the same experience people jump to the conclusion that it will go the way of Weimar, and actually evoke the spectre of civil war—on exactly the same principle according to which, some three years ago, the first real crisis which the Bonn Government underwent after seven-

F. R. ALLEMANN is a Swiss journalist and author who has contributed regularly to ENCOUNTER. Among his books are a study of the Swiss Cantons, two volumes on Middle East Nationalism, and an analysis of present-day Portugal. West Germany will shortly be holding its fifth national elections since the establishment of the Bundesrepublik twenty years ago.

teen years of exceptional stability was immediately exaggerated into a state of emergency.

*Bonn ist nicht Weimar* ("Bonn is not Weimar") was the title I gave thirteen years ago to a study of the opportunities and dangers facing democracy in the Federal Republic. Few people read the book, but they quoted its title all the more frequently. Characteristically, they generally did so when they saw an opportunity of questioning its apparently so reprehensibly optimistic thesis. That *Bonn is Weimar*, or at least is in danger of *becoming* Weimar, has come to be one of the favourite ideas of journalistic Cassandras which they bring out on every suitable, and even more on every unsuitable occasion. This is not new. In the very first years of the Federal Republic friends and foes of the new democratic experiment were alike obsessed by the idea that something similar to what happened between 1918 and 1933 was bound to be repeated after 1949.

"Weimar" has become for the Germans—and especially for the democrats among them—what psychologists call a trauma. They once failed to take advantage of the opportunity for democracy and threw it away in a manner that led to barefaced tyranny and from tyranny straight to total collapse. Whenever they feel symptoms in their political body that are even remotely reminiscent of the fever they suffered at that time, they react neurotically to them. Instead of soberly analysing the symptoms and looking for the disturbances that have produced them, they collapse on to a sofa and murmur in panic: "*Ganz wie in Weimar*—Just as in Weimar..."

IN REALITY this monomania is nothing but a convenient means of avoiding recognition of their true situation and thus dodging any therapy of their thoroughly real disorders. If the Federal Republic fails it will not be because it is faced by the same or very similar difficulties as those which brought down the first attempt at democracy in Germany, but for another reason: because it imagines itself to be suffering from sicknesses from which it is not suffering, thereby overlooking the true nature of those illnesses that really have attacked it. When its citizens feel unwell, they can think of nothing to blame but the Weimar bacillus. Through rigidly concentrating on what once happened to them, and according to wide-

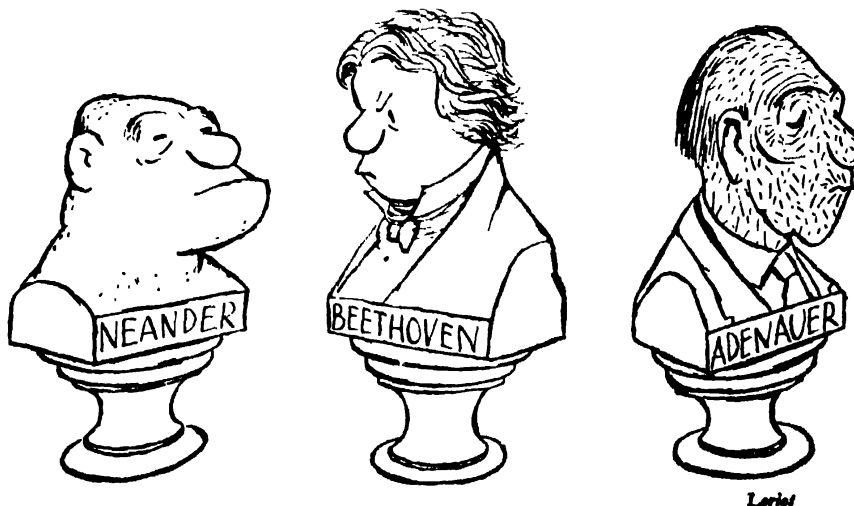
spread opinion could happen to them again at any moment, they fail to attack the disease where its true roots lie.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED in Germany in early '30s—and what is happening now?

The Weimar democracy perished in the vortex of the most serious world economic crisis since the dawn of the industrial era. But even before this, it had suffered from a potentially fragile constitution. And this above all for one reason: because a large section of the German people had from the outset been not merely critical, but undisguisedly hostile towards the State that had taken the place of the Hohenzollern Monarchy and, along with the rest of its inheritance, had been forced to shoulder the blame for the defeat of 1918. Some—those on the Right—dreamed of a return to the greatness of Imperial Germany, now hopelessly lost, or imagined that all the country needed was a strong man to restore "order." Others saw the cause of the trouble in the half-hearted pseudo-revolution that had followed the lost war and sought salvation in Communism.

The democratic centre was weak and only occasionally able to form even an adequate parliamentary majority out of its own strength and without the aid of people who wanted nothing to do with the Republic. It grew even weaker as the tempests of the world economic crisis drove more and more voters into the arms of the most radical of the Republic's opponents. Then the Nazis and Communists developed into that "negative majority" which was united in a ruthless battle with the "System," but in nothing else, and whose exponents fought one another to the death.

It was this memory which the fathers of the Basic Law had in mind when they set about drafting a new constitution as a democratic emergency roof for the three Western occupation



zones. This undertaking, too, was completely dominated by the effects of the Weimar shock. The main concern was how to prevent the emergence of fresh "negative majorities." Out of this sprang both the endeavour to deny anti-constitutional parties any share in determining the political will of the nation by means of a veto enshrined in the constitution, and also the new concept of the "constructive vote of no confidence."<sup>1</sup>

In reality, however, the starting point of the Federal Republic was in no way to be compared with that of its predecessor. If during the Weimar era a large minority, which later grew into a majority, had rejected the democratic State from the outset, there was now—under the influence of the disaster into which National Socialism had plunged the German people—an overwhelming and ever-increasing majority prepared to make the best of democracy.

Please note: this did not by any means imply that all Germans had become democratic overnight. They accepted democracy because this kind of order satisfied their need for peace and quiet after decades of constant revolutionary upheavals, because it made few demands on its citizens, and because moreover, during the long era of Konrad Adenauer, it achieved an undreamed-measure of stability and above all of economic prosperity. They wanted no more. It never occurred to them that democracy is a difficult form of government that depends upon the collaboration of the citizens.

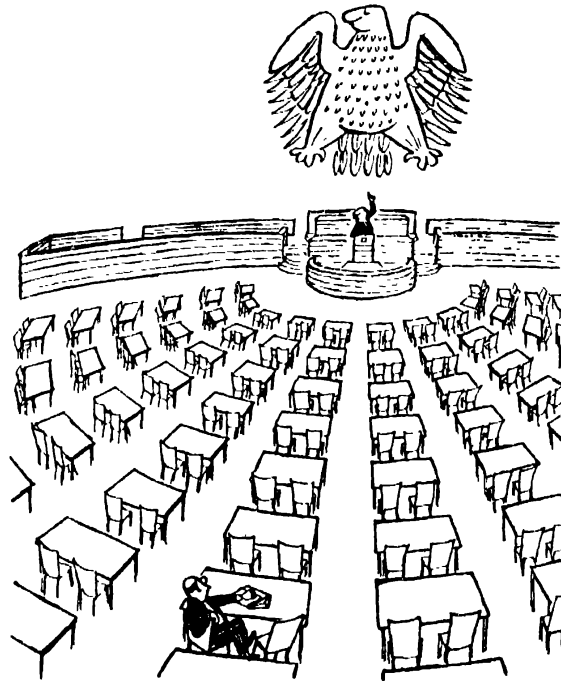
THIS ATTITUDE OF PASSIVE ACCEPTANCE presented a chance and a danger. A chance that something like a democratic tradition might develop out of gradual passive habituation to the democratic process (for what else is tradition but habit that

has become established and is taken for granted?). And the danger that a régime which rests less upon the conscious will of its citizens than upon their adaptation to existing, and for the moment apparently highly satisfactory, conditions is ill-prepared for stresses and strains. That such stresses and strains might, indeed would, occur had always to be assumed. If I ventured in 1956 the prognosis that Bonn was not Weimar, this statement by no means implied a prediction that the Federal Republic would always cope with its problems in effortless *élan*. It meant that the tests which stood before it would be of quite a different kind from those on which the Weimar Republic had bled to death.

Everything that has happened since then has rather confirmed me in this conviction than shaken it. And this is not because I have any tendency to dismiss the present crisis of the Federal Republic as innocuous. "Bonn is not Weimar" does not mean that everything is in apple-pie order. Nor does it mean that the weaknesses and infirmities of the political organism that are coming to light today are less dangerous than those which brought down the weak-chested ancestor of the Bonn State, which itself is not exactly robust. It simply means that they have a different root. To reduce it to a very simple, no doubt over-

simplified, formula—the democracy that collapsed in 1933 was the victim of constitutional high blood pressure—today's fainting fits, on the other hand, are the consequence of a low blood pressure that has lasted far too long.

WHAT MADE the Weimar Republic's life difficult from the outset was the lack of a minimum of what the political scientists call a "consensus." There was absolutely no agreement about even the fundamentals of the political order, precisely because the State was opposed in principle by a large proportion of its citizens. Antagonisms and conflicts are inevitable in a democracy. But when there is no longer any common ground on which they can be settled, the danger exists that the community will split apart when confronted by an acute crisis.



Loriot

<sup>1</sup> Article 67 of the Basic Law reads: "The *Bundestag* can express no confidence in the Federal Chancellor only by choosing a successor with the majority of its members and requesting the Federal President to dismiss the Federal Chancellor. The Federal President must comply with this request and appoint the Chancellor elect.—Forty-eight hours must elapse between the request and the election.

The West German Federal Republic has never known any similar state of fragmentation. There have indeed been harsh political controversies. But the subject of dispute was merely the form and political orientation of a community life supported equally by all, or almost all, the adversaries—if we leave aside the Communists and Neo-Nazis, who were progressively withering away and sinking to the point of total insignificance. The struggle was for a greater or lesser degree of external attachment, a greater or lesser degree of economic planning, a greater or lesser degree of participation in the growing social product. But it was fought out, not merely formally, on the basis of the constitution, which was recognised and invoked equally by all the antagonists.

And no one ever lost sight of the fact that they were all in the same boat and that only the course to be taken by this boat was at issue, not whether they should sink it or change to another ship.

BY THE END OF the 1950s at the latest, even these controversies began to fade away. The Opposition, which had always supported the State, now stepped on to the Government platform as regards the major questions of practical politics. By accepting the "social market economy" as well as the Atlantic Alliance and the goal of European Unity within the framework of the six States of the European Economic Community, the Social Democrats reduced political conflict to an argument about shades of emphasis and the question as to which of the competing groups could best carry out the policy which they all advocated.

The slogan on which the SPD fought the *Bundestag* elections of 1961 may be regarded as a classical expression of this transformation. The Socialists did not want "to change everything, but only to improve much" (*nicht alles anders, aber vieles besser machen*). Thereby an objective alternative was replaced by a personal one. The problem was now merely whether a Government led by Willy Brandt would best be able to steer the ship of state towards the universally accepted goals.

This political situation of almost total consensus reached its climax and conclusion with the formation of the Great Coalition. After essential political differences of opinion had been eliminated from the conflict between the two major parties, the Federal Republic was now vouchsafed a Government whose ninety per cent super-majority in Parliament excluded even the possibility of a personal alternative and could no longer be unseated from without by democratic methods. If Adenauer's Government, at

least in its later stages, and the Government of the unutterably unpolitical Erhard from the beginning, had been reproached for their "immobilism," this immobility had now been positively institutionalised in a régime without Opposition.

The Great Coalition—let us not deceive ourselves about that—is in practice nothing but the exact political equivalent of that vague "*formierte Gesellschaft*" dreamed of by Ludwig Erhard with his fateful predilection for phrases as high-sounding as they are hazy: a society of perfect "integration" and agreement, deceptively free from tension, in which incipient conflicts are not fought out but either reconciled or simply stifled. But a democracy without an Opposition is a soup without salt. With one difference: a salt-free diet may be recommended for health reasons. Democracy without Opposition, however, not only tastes insipid but is also an unwholesome diet that either makes people apathetic and slack, or else provokes violent defence reactions in an organism that needs tensions in order to stay alive.

THE NEW RADICALISM as expressed in the student unrest (and in a different fashion in the growth of the NPD, most recently in the provincial elections in Baden-Württemberg) is nothing but one such defence reaction. Anyone who is not satisfied with existing conditions, anyone who considers reforms necessary, today inevitably runs his head against a wall—because there is no longer anyone to guide this dissatisfaction into democratic channels, to represent the will to reform in Parliament, to express the desire for change in constitutional terms and above all to gain respect for it. Such opposition as exists today finds itself thrown back upon the instrument of provocation, even of violence, as the only one by means of which a minority can make itself heard and compel the compact majority at least to take some notice of its minorities.

Even while the SPD stood outside the Government it was admittedly just as much part of the "Establishment" as it is now, when it sits in the cabinet. But at least it left to those who hoped for changes—with the exception of small groups of outsiders cut off from any sort of mass basis—the possibility of an alternative administration more willing to carry out reforms. But the moment this hope was nullified by the Great Coalition the buds of extremism began to blossom. Anyone who interprets the demonstrations and acts of violence, in which the "Extra-Parliamentary Opposition" indulges, as the products of a cunningly thought-out strategy of revolution—as the Springer press especially is con-

stantly doing—is overlooking this connection. In fact they are less the outcome of a robust will to power than a manifestation of impotence. The rioters riot because they see no other way of effectively proclaiming their rejection of existing conditions.

Nothing is more characteristic of this than their action against the Springer papers. The enormous success of the publisher Axel Springer, which has given him a position of such unique power in the world of journalism, springs precisely from the fact that his newspapers and periodicals—and above all an organ like the *Bild-Zeitung* and its various offshoots—exactly mirror that unpolitical and self-satisfied consumer society, based on individual advancement and collective coma, against which the youthful revolutionaries are revolting. Why does every third German read the *Bild-Zeitung*? Because this magazine indulges his aversion to serious discussion as well as his prejudices and secret longings. To this extent the master of the mightiest press empire in Europe is entirely correct when he attributes the enormous editions of his products to a “readers’ plebiscite” and feels that he has thereby received a democratic mandate.

WHEN THE STUDENTS besiege his printing-presses, seek to prevent or at least delay delivery of the *Bild-Zeitung*, set fire to the firm’s trucks and smash the office windows with stones, they are trying to strike at a “symbolic figure” of society, because they cannot get at this society itself. They strike out wildly at symbols because in their heart of hearts they know that they are absolutely incapable of anything else—namely, of a political action aimed at radically altering this society.

That they are thereby—against their will—merely playing into the hands of those who wish to replace the slack but spontaneous Federal Republican consensus by one that is taut and safeguarded by authoritarian means, is another story. “We don’t need to make any more propaganda; the students are doing it for us!”—this statement by an NPD man on the occasion of a rowdy election meeting very nearly broken up completely by squads of youthful hecklers ought to make us think. And Herr von Thadden’s

men know very well that in the face of left-wing radical excesses a strategy of fake democracy offers the best results—ten per cent in Baden-Württemberg.

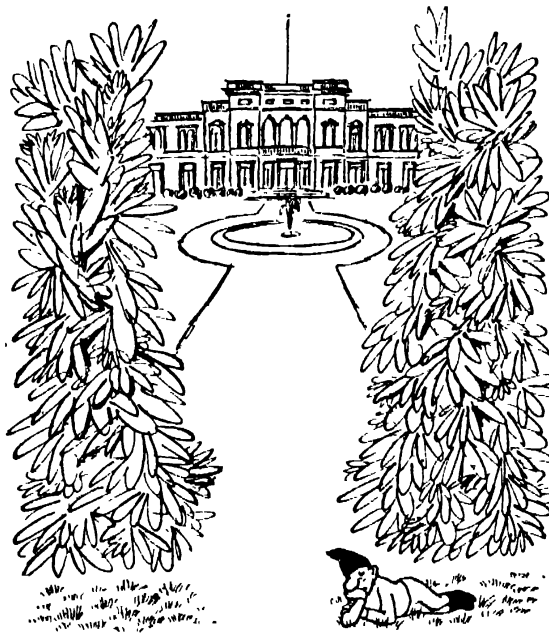
The more noisily and provocatively the Extra-Parliamentary Opposition behaves, the more quiet, obliging, respectable and “loyal to the State” becomes the image presented by the right-wing radicals. “DEMOCRATS VOTE NATIONAL DEMOCRAT” said their election poster in Baden-Württemberg, and at their meetings the front of the hall was decked out with a black, red and gold flag bearing the initials of their party; their speakers had strict instructions to behave with as much moderation, restraint, and good manners as possible.

For while the Ultras of the Left are seeking a substitute satisfaction for frustrated hopes of reform in pseudo-revolutionary gestures, the Ultras

on the opposite side have learnt that the German bourgeois must not be scared, but would prefer even protest to be administered in the shape of tranquillising pills. And so today the admirers and heirs of Hitler assure us that all they want is more calm, more order, that is to say, that they are nothing but more vigorous and less inhibited Christian Democrats.

This is revealing. It illustrates the fact that the manipulators of authoritarian longings are at least better psychologists than those of the anti-authoritarian revolt. The former try to evade and trick the resistance to radicalism by an outward but demonstrative acceptance of the democratic rules of the game; the latter lash out in all directions all the more wildly because they think there is no other way of piercing the dense layer of indifference, and with these revolutionary antics in an utterly unrevolutionary situation they are blindly playing the game of the worst reactionaries.

ONLY IF WE BEAR these facts in mind can we grasp the fundamental difference between the present situation and the other one, in which the Weimar democracy was ground to pulp between the millstones of the anti-democratic forces. Certainly parallels can be drawn—but they lie only on the surface and are decep-



Loriot

tive. In the days of Weimar, political opponents fought in the streets; during the last year we have once more witnessed such battles. At that time murder was one of the instruments of politics; with the attempted assassination of Rudi Dutschke a political leader has become the target of a would-be murder for the first time since the founding of the Federal Republic. Between 1918 and 1933, and particularly during the last years of this era, the extremes lifted one another up like the opposite ends of a seesaw; for some time we have been able to observe at least the beginning of a similar process.

But the radical difference in the starting-point seems to me far more important than any such parallelism of individual phenomena. The Weimar Republic was a weak State because it was absolutely unable to bring about any agreement on essential points and because it was confronted by powerful—at critical moments over-powerful—Opposition groups, which questioned its very essence. The Federal Republic, on the other hand, has suffered, at the latest since the coalition of its two strongest political forces, from an excessive consensus and from the atrophy of oppositional energies.

Weimar was faced with mutually exclusive alternatives; Bonn has happily manoeuvred itself into a position in which there are no visible alternatives. In the early '30s a trend towards the two radical poles of aggressive hostility to the State arose out of a permanent state of high pressure that was intensified to the limit by an economic disaster of unheard-of proportions and culminated in a violent explosion. In the late '60s the radical tendencies of certain strata of society—intellectual youth on the one hand, and the "nationalist" bourgeoisie on the other—represent nothing but a reaction to a chronic low pressure that is paralysing the political organism.

Against the State of Heinrich Brüning (1930–1932) masses were mobilised and filled to excess with political ideology. Kurt-Georg Kiesinger's Government, which rests precisely on the masses' loss of interest in politics, is being assailed by an activist minority just because they know that they can neither win over and convince the compact majority, nor defeat and overcome it, but only antagonise it.

ONE SITUATION IS NO LESS dangerous than the other. A State can not only smash to pieces against an excess of opposition; it can also waste away from an excess of agreement. The Germans in the Federal Republic never understood, let alone took, the chance offered by the presence of a strong democratic Opposition. As a result they have now conjured up an anti-democratic

Opposition which, while it cannot overthrow the State, can show up its helplessness.

For almost two decades Germans did not know what to do with the alternation of Government and Opposition in which lies the essence of democracy. Now they must see that they have thereby driven that part of the next generation which has grown tired of the everlasting monotony and the empty fuss of politics into an attitude of negative protest. Out of a panic fear of "experiments" they confuse lethargy with stability. Now they are astounded to see that for sheer lack of training, the organs of their democratic body are suffering from galloping atrophy. And when this disease can no longer be overlooked, they can find no other means of describing it than the magic formula *Bonn ist doch Weimar* ("Bonn is Weimar after all"). . . .

It is nothing of the sort. It is the mirror image of a society that fears nothing so much as change and desires nothing so much as peace and quiet. The death agony of the Weimar Republic was almost like a burning fever; the Bonn Republic's agony bears more resemblance to sleeping sickness. Those who cannot see the difference make a cure impossible.

Western Germany does not need more calm and order, but readiness to carry out reforms. It does not need an even more ruthlessly drastic State authority, but recollection that the "open society" can only subsist if it does not remain a sleepy society. The malaise from which it is suffering can no more be cured by the truncheon than by rioting and grotesquely inappropriate shouts of "*Ho-Ho-Ho-Chi-minh*". There is only one cure for the sickness of democracy: a democratic (but certainly not a "national democratic") Opposition. Today unrest is the citizen's first duty—but a purposeful unrest that does not impotently throw stones at the walls. The problem is not to frighten the citizen, but to give him courage.

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## INDEX TO VOLUME XXXII

The Index to Volume XXXII (January–June 1969) is now available and will be sent, free of charge, on application to ENCOUNTER, 25 Haymarket, London, S.W.1. Standing orders for future indexes can also be accepted.

Readers who have already applied to be put on our new standing order list need not apply again, as they will receive the new index automatically.

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## LETTERS

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### Is Pornography "Better"?

I SHOULD BE obliged if Mr. Rolph would either substantiate or withdraw the statement in his article "The Age of 'Obscenity'" [ENCOUNTER, June, p. 20].

I recall this because of its interesting implication that, in Mr. Allen's view, pornography is rather worse than obscenity or indecency, which can appear innocent by comparison with it. Mr. Geoffrey Gorer thinks it rather better.

In the essay which I contributed to the symposium *Does Pornography Matter?* which Mr. Rolph edited, a large part of my argument was that obscenity and pornography have different frames of reference, as indeed Mr. Rolph shows in his generous quotations on p. 21. Since the frames of reference are different, it would seem to me as foolish to say pornography is "better" than obscenity as to say scarlet is "better" than Tuesday. I rather dislike having illogical value judgments attributed to me.

GEOFFREY GORER

Haywards Heath  
Sussex

ANY VALUE JUDGMENT attributed to Mr. Gorer and deemed by him illogical is hereby declared void. He seemed to me to be saying, in the words I quoted, that since pornography is (and obscenity is not) "confined to the higher civilisations," it is rather better than obscenity in the sense that the Parthenon is better than the Monkees. But the comparison was his, not mine, whether they fit the same frame of reference or not. Me, I much prefer Tuesday to scarlet, and find no difficulty in quantifying the enjoyment I get from each.

C. H. ROLPH

London

### Progressivism as a Reactionary Utopia

WRYLY, Professor C. B. Cox's vituperative review [ENCOUNTER, May] of *Who are the Progressives Now?* gave me more satisfaction than had done many a kindlier notice of my book. He, at least, had recognised in the progressive schools the steel of their enmity to the embattled academic authority he himself would restore.

Reporting as it did a dialogue between progressives, my book no doubt left exposed a flank to the reactionaries. In truth, I had not thought these very important to the educational debate; nor, despite the recent publicity for their Black Book, do I yet think them so. As a foil, however, for a

resolution to the debate between progressives themselves, the hostility of a Professor Cox may have its uses.

Even so, despite the rough-and-tumble, I would have hoped from one of professorial status for more integrity of debate. If I am quoted as writing of "a world of 'sanity' in which all conflict would be solved," do I expect too much of a reviewer that he should state this was cited as the sort of thing precisely *not* discussed at Dartington? Or perhaps Professor Cox was in too much of a hurry to prove his caricature of our discussion? As for his treatment of Dr. Winnicott, this was a solecism. As such, it not so much harms the reputation of a great man as it reveals Professor Cox's preconceptions. He should withdraw.

Professor Cox is throughout concerned to equate honesty of disagreement with muddle-headed stupidity. It would be a sorry day if ever he succeeded. It seems to me, at least, that the academic world is indeed sufficiently disturbed to allow an honesty of disagreement amongst those who look below its surface.

In so far, then, as my book had as its purpose to sting that authoritarianism which passes as education, I have partially succeeded. But I did not wish merely to sting; I hoped to be constructive. I do reject --and said so, but was not credited therewith --the nihilism of student reaction to educational authoritarianism.

Because they have been through it all, long since, progressives--if that is still a serviceable term for those who only would bring education into line with life--know that regressive Marxism, say, is equally as hopeless as the hippies' opting out. They also know (pace your editorial caption) that there is no Utopia but a reactionary one and that no education can ignore everyday reality, ordinarily understood. Yet the questioning of received knowledge, the recrudescence of Anarchy, underlying the pathetic poles of youthful reaction, remains valid--and does so for reasons more deeply impregnated into thought than even Edward Shils allowed. The student crisis, after all, is also the crisis of the social sciences: that is, of what social understanding is. Here, Professor Cox's extolling of the "up-to-date research" (what research?) is symptomatic. How perennially unaware of itself is academicism! Presumably, the universities will yet tell us that their disintegration is impossible because they have not researched into its causes.

In this situation, the progressive schools are concerned continuously to examine the very concept of "school." This is a form of research--the living testing of our language--to which the authoritarian mind is not very well suited. Never mind! The best of such minds may yet (could they but understand what is happening) save something recognisable from the present educational system--though corporal punishment, finally, may have to be sacrificed. In this form of research, however, misrepresentation remains a poor tool. Those who use it serve ill the cause of academic orthodoxy.

MAURICE A. ASH

Ashprington, Totnes,  
Devon

## Cranston's Marcuse

MAY I ADD a brief point in defence of Mr. Maurice Cranston's strictures on Professor Marcuse against an American critic like Mr. Graham Good [ENCOUNTER, June]?

During the War, it was my melancholy task week by week to study the writings of Dr. Goebbels and when years later I first read *One-Dimensional Man*, certain resemblances, certain uncanny echoes, struck me. Dr. Goebbels too, depicted Britain and other Western societies as one single closed (i.e. totalitarian) thought system, in Marcusean terms "one huge captive audience," whose thoughts were completely conditioned and manipulated by Jewish Pluto-democracy, Jewish dominated or corrupt politicians and the Jewish capitalist press, until by sleight of hand Britain under Churchill was less free than Germany under the *Gestapo* and Goebbels' total censorship.

Now, if we take away the adjective "Jewish" from the above sentence, is some resemblance to the ideas in *One-Dimensional Man* not plain? I am quite prepared to accept that Goebbels may represent the extreme bad and Marcuse the extreme good of a certain way of thinking. The point is that this thinking is so Germanic and elitist, that it moves—to use Mr. Good's term—on "a plane of

generality" which is so vast, that even quite *apart* from Goebbels' use of the adjective "Jewish," it seems fatally easy in either case to regard ordinary individuals, to use Mr. Good's term again, as "sickeningly vulgarised," and the Nazi camps, in Professor Marcuse's words, as "the image and in a sense the quintessence of the infernal society into which we are plunged every day." I may add that these resemblances to the language of *Das Reich* struck me long before Marcuse had become a cult among the young and I had any need to feel prejudiced.

I repeat, I accept the self-evident fact that Goebbels was evil while Marcuse may only wish to do good, but something in the all-embracing character of Marcuse's message worries me. Many young German soldiers I interrogated during the war felt sure they knew the simple defects of society which it was their task to put right—they knew this with the same wonderful certainty of youth displayed by the Marcusean students of today who assume the right to shout down political opponents. However, since the problems of society are never simple, such actions can have unpredictable consequences. Indeed, has not Professor Marcuse himself already issued warnings about all such over-simplifications?

T. R. FYVEL

London

## On the Difficulties of Being an Anti-Nazi

By Peter Calvocoressi

I WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT on one aspect of the exchanges between Mr. David Astor and Mr. Christopher Sykes [ENCOUNTER, December, June and July] regarding the proper evaluation of the role of the German anti-Nazis and the British understanding of that role. A number of people have for many years been uneasy not merely about whether justice has been done to the Germans who conspired against Hitler, but also about the more difficult question whether there has been on the British side a sufficiently candid examination of British attitudes towards them. It is alleged that Englishmen in positions of authority paid scant heed to the German anti-Nazis owing to an innate failure of understanding and, further, that through this failure they missed chances of averting the war or shortening it.

These issues raise the starkly basic question of what the war was about, for if it was a war against Nazism—as was frequently alleged, not least by those in authority—then the anti-Nazi conspirators were indubitable allies.

Many of the young people who found themselves caught up in war in 1939 believed that they were fighting fascism and, in particular, its German variant, Nazism. In so far as they went to kill with good spirit and a clear conscience, they did so be-

cause Nazism was foul and had to be extinguished: its values were evil, its practices abominable, and its ideal of society and system of government corrupt. They fought against these things and they were justified not only morally but also in the sense that their victory did destroy Hitler's Nazism.

But anti-Nazism would never have started a war. In order for there to be a war in which Nazism could be destroyed, there had to be a war about something else. Wars are started by governments in the sense that it is governments which give the signal to start fighting. No government asked itself in the 1930s whether it should go to war to destroy Nazism. What governments ~~asked~~ asked themselves was whether they would have to go to war to stop Hitler—by which they meant stopping the territorial expansion of the German state. Therefore the war, when it came, was a war against Germany. The part of Hitler's programme which provoked it was not the beliefs or practices of Nazism but the infringement of frontiers by Germany. (Similarly, in 1941, Great Britain declared itself an ally of the Soviet state regardless of the beliefs and practices of its rulers.)

The German conspirators against Hitler were the natural allies of anybody fighting Nazism but they were not natural allies of a state fighting—or con-



templating having to fight—against Germany. And those in charge of the state, whether politicians or officials, would be the first to think of them as Germans and so enemies rather than anti-Nazis and so allies. Furthermore, to the men who counted in England the German anti-Nazis had another very bad mark against their names. They were traitors. They themselves were bothered about this. How much more was the typical member of the British ruling class disposed to cold-shoulder them. David Astor tells a frightfully chilling but equally revealing story about the British official who told him that Count von Schwerin's private mission to London in 1939 to talk about the German General Staff's plans to stop Hitler was "damned cheek."

IT IS, I BELIEVE, within this frame of reference that one should see Adam von Trott's "nationalism" and his sympathy for Subhas Chandra Bose. Trott loved Germany. That was one of the reasons why he was so convinced and heroic an anti-Nazi *bis zum bitteren Ende*. In normal times an Englishman who loved his country would have honoured Trott for his patriotism—and would have trusted him the more. But in the shadow of an Anglo-German war Trott's love of Germany became a sinister kind of nationalism, justifying those of his friends, acquaintances and judges who—because of the war—found it more convenient to think worse of him. So too with the Indian business. In normal times Trott's anti-imperialism and his support for Indian nationalism would have seemed nothing special in London or Oxford, where plenty of Englishmen held similar views. But in the context of an Anglo-German war these sentiments of his were given a different emphasis and became evidence for treating him as an enemy and not as a friend—because, to repeat, it was more conventional and convenient to do so.

Two hundred years ago or more it might not have been so. It might have been easier to recognise a friend and ally within the enemy's land, but in an age whose wars have been basically national and territorial in spite of the ideological language sometimes employed in them most people find it too difficult to discriminate between friends and enemies by any but national criteria. One should deplore this without being surprised by it. It was a great pity, and something of a shame to them, that the rulers of a country like Great Britain were unable to think better than that. Their understanding was feeble. Further, they talked anti-Nazism without really understanding or believing it.

BUT WHAT WERE THE consequences of their failure? Can it justly be argued that, had their understanding been less feeble, the war could have been prevented or shortened? These questions cannot be answered with assurance. The Halder/Witzleben plot was ruined by Chamberlain's diplomacy. But would it otherwise have succeeded? We cannot say. But what I think we can say is that there was at least a chance of gaining time and even peace this way; that it was a more honourable way than Chamberlain's of throwing Czechoslovakia to the wolves; and that it was also a more expedient way. (For reasons which I cannot elaborate here I have

become convinced that Munich was a huge strategic error as well as a shameful deed.)

Once the war had started the question is whether it might have been shortened by some form of cooperation with the conspirators? What form? Expression of support? Active help in promoting a military *coup* or the assassination of Hitler? We do not know. The conspirators themselves were, not surprisingly, never all of one mind or continuously of the same mind. But one of the reasons why we do not know is that nobody in authority on our side seems to have been interested in finding out. Yet, given the awfulness of the war, one would think that anything like this was worth pursuing. Some far crazier things were.

University of Sussex

### Astor, Trott, Trevor-Roper

THOSE WHO QUOTE other writers in order to dissent from them have a duty to quote correctly, taking account of the context from which they abstract the words or phrases which they quote.

Mr. David Astor [ENCOUNTER, June] quotes me as "belittling" Adam von Trott as "ultra-nationalistic," a "devious German intriguer," and states that I considered it "a damaging revelation that Trott's official reports, intended for Nazi eyes, read that way."

Anyone who reads my review (in the *Sunday Times*) of Mr. Sykes' book can see that Mr. Astor has totally misrepresented its tenor. The phrase "devious German intriguer" is in *oratio obliqua*: I am quoting the impression which Trott made on Hubert Ripka. I explicitly reminded the reader that if Trott's reports did not make pleasant reading after 1945, they were "written by Trott for Hitler himself and phrased in the language appropriate to such a reader." I never described Trott, directly or by implication, as "ultra-nationalistic." I merely wrote that he was "deeply German" and that "even those who did not know him must surely admire a German nationalist who..."

This distortion of my clearly expressed views does not encourage me to accept Mr. Astor as a guide in obscurer matters.

H. R. TREVOR-ROPER

Oxford

### Sir John Wheeler-Bennett's Reply

IN YOUR JUNE ISSUE, in the course of an attack on Mr. Christopher Sykes' book *Troubled Loyalty*—a book which personally I found wholly admirable, eminently fair, and deeply understanding—Mr. David Astor suggests that there might have been a successful *coup de main* against Hitler during the War had the British and United States Governments given support and encouragement to the German Resistance Movement. He goes on to attribute to me a substantial measure of responsibility

for the fact that this support and encouragement was not forthcoming.

I do not propose to reply at length to Mr. Astor's charges, but I would like to make one statement and to ask one question:

1. At no time—before, during, or after the War—was I in a position to exercise the kind or degree of influence which Mr. Astor ascribes to me. I would add, however, that had I occupied such a position, my influence would have been cast against H.M.G.'s pursuing so impractical a policy. I believed then, and I believe now, that whatever may or may not have been said in 1938, once hostilities had begun, it was essential that Germany be defeated in the field and compelled to surrender unconditionally—whatever government might be in control of *Reich* policies at the time. It was essential that there should be no recurrence of the "stab-in-the-back" exculpatory fallacy. I also believed, and still believe, that any plot against Hitler must succeed of itself and would have been less likely to do so with Allied support or promises for the future. Real or alleged foreign interference can only strengthen national resistance, and one need only recall the slur that attached to the Weimar Republic as being "wished upon" Germany in 1918 by President Wilson and the Allies.

2. Can Mr. Astor or his friends adduce any kind of convincing contemporary evidence that the German Resistance Movement—in which there were indisputably men and women of the highest courage, probity and honour—could have been successful in overthrowing Hitler, even had they been in receipt of Anglo-American support and encouragement? None is or was known to me. I have discovered nothing to alter the views which I expressed in my book on the German Army in politics.

JOHN WHEELER-BENNETT

Garsington Manor  
Oxon.

### "The L.S.E. Story"

It is so sad that while one can partly agree with Michael Beloff's conclusion to "The L.S.E. Story" [ENCOUNTER, May] that "... when one surveys the whole history up to now, the impression left is one of its hopeless irrelevance...", one is compelled to add that the historiographers have wasted our time even more than have the events themselves. Beloff's further inflation of the literature fails to answer many questions and augurs ill for that future enlightenment to be afforded by historians reviewing the documents at an even safer distance from the affray.

Mr. Beloff's careless errors of fact should not pass uncorrected; certainly they tend to undermine the respect one can pay his analysis. First, University College is not the same thing as *ULU*: the latter was occupied, not the former. Indeed, University College Union voted the use of its facilities to the locked out *LSE* students. Second, Beloff inverts the sequence of events to write: "Thus 'the vote to occupy' over the Viet Nam Demo weekend reversed

a previous decision not to do so taken the day before." Actually, the first vote, on 17 October, was for the occupation; the next, on 23 October, withdrew support (by 598 to 592 votes, on the second count) although a motion "to not condemn" the occupation was carried by acclamation at the same meeting immediately after the recount. Third, Beloff is ill informed on the gates issue. He writes that they "... were small and feeble grilles which a casual visitor finds hard to locate." It would be a very casual visitor who did not discover that the most prominent gates have not been replaced, and that those which have been replaced are made deliberately less obtrusive than the originals.

How ironic that Mr. Beloff takes students to task for the inaccuracy of their publications. It would be ungenerous to imply that Michael Beloff does not get some facts right. They are, however, selected facts, leading inevitably to tendentious conclusions. Although he writes, "the most significant fact about Socialist Society strategy has been their manipulation of the Student Union..." he does not mention the largest *LSE* Students Union Meeting ever held, at Friends Meeting House, Euston, on 3 February during the lockout. The hall was packed well above capacity; the capacity seating at Friends Meeting House is 1,200, and most reports agree that there were more than 1,500 students present. Presumably this meeting is not mentioned because its outcome would not fit in well with Mr. Beloff's "manipulation" thesis. Those present voted overwhelmingly to condemn the use of police on the campus, to affirm that the removal of the gates was Union policy, and to call for an immediate reopening of *LSE*. This was generally reported as a massive defeat for the "conspiracy" allegations, and for Dr. Adams, who had publicly called for the meeting to express some support for him.

Mr. Beloff is one of the very few serious commentators who have concluded that it was the militants "who have been throughout the pacemakers and moulders of events..." To Mr. Beloff things are very black and white. Militants: black. Authorities: white. Incredibly, he hands out bouquets to almost every established figure in sight. Lord Robbins is "the expansionist pioneer of the report that bears his name"; Dr. Adams is portrayed as a totally heroic and self-sacrificing figure; Trevor-Roper comes to *LSE* and "delivers himself of a brilliant lecture." Did Beloff hear or read it? Did he witness Trevor-Roper's performance under the questioning of Greek students immediately after the lecture?

No wonder Mr. Beloff, who apparently teaches Law at Oxford, finds it surprising that the Law Faculty at the *LSE* were "Doves"! When you see things as clearly as he does, there is no excuse for attempting mediation.

Beloff writes of Londoners who "scurried" past a student march, "this was apart from, not a part of their lives, a circus not a liberating army." We at the *LSE* may look to Oxford for a liberating army of intellectuals, but it seems we are more likely to find complacent ex-reformers, who no longer even feel the need to get their facts straight.

ADRIAN HAM

London

1. I accept Mr. Ham's correction that it was *ULU* and not University College that *LSE* exiles occupied. Whether this error "undermines the respect one can pay [my] analysis" is for others to judge.

2. I accept Mr. Ham's correction over the sequence of Viet Nam occupation voting. I was wrong to say that the militants pack meetings to win a "democratic" majority. On this new basis they are careless of whether they have such a majority or not.

3. I have viewed the gates before and after. They are "small and feeble grilles." Mr. Ham's comment on the alterations to them makes less sense on second reading than on first, and I must perforce forbear to comment on it.

4. I did not fail to mention the 3 February meeting from any malicious motive. The whole argument of my piece is that the majority of non-militant students *do* support the militant minority when the authorities take action against the latter; especially when, as a by-product, the school is closed. If Mr. Ham suggests that the votes taken at this meeting (on composite motions that made little discrimination between various aspects of the situation) showed that the majority of *LSE* students hold revolutionary views, then I must demur.

To the remainder of Mr. Ham's letter serious reply is unnecessary. Is Lord Robbins *not* an author of the Robbins' Report? (And is this a "bouquet"?) Does Mr. Ham dispute the facts of Dr. Adams' career previous to his appointment at *LSE*? Yes, I read Professor Trevor-Roper's lecture; "brilliant" it indeed was. I do not "apparently" teach law at Oxford; I teach law at Oxford. Has Mr. Ham evidence of any great, or any, support for the rebels of "The London School of Comics" among the denizens of the metropolis?

If asked to choose between a complacent ex-reformer and a phony revolutionary, I would probably choose the former. But of course this is not the choice genuine reformers need to make.

MICHAEL BELOFF

Londo

## The Berkeley Syndrome

I HAVE OFTEN wondered if the influence of George Berkeley (1685-1753) does not amount to an important explanation of university chaos in the United States and elsewhere.

Berkeley was the talented Irish philosopher who with the rousing line

*Westward the course of Empire takes its way*

earned for himself the added distinction of having the university town of Berkeley named after him. An equally revealing recourse to the history of ideas might begin by reminiscing that Berkeley occupies a prominent position in the development of philosophy through his colourful denial of the existence of matter.

Berkeley maintained, as is well known, that material things only exist through being perceived. This means that for all practical purposes an egg or a sit-in, for example, would cease to exist if no one was looking at either. It is an unusual philosophy—though less so if one believes in God, as he shows. Nevertheless, it is one which seems to have acquired further prominence in recent years among university authorities everywhere.

Appropriately, it all began in the University of California at Berkeley in the early 1960s. The policy whereby authorities are known to behave like ostriches in the face of student violence and terror was first practised there. By now, Berkeley's genuine offspring elsewhere in the leadership of academia have popularised the view that all will always be well as long as we stick our heads into the sand, so to speak, not looking at the turmoil around us—and certainly doing nothing to stop it, as this would invariably mean that we are silly enough to recognise it.

Hence, the widespread "tolerance" of modern universities in the face of lawlessness by now afoot everywhere in academia, and the consequent myth that student anarchy, whenever and wherever it erupts, is not subject to the law of the land. Yet both historical experience and elementary "punishment-reward" theory suggest that trying to "combat" violence and terror with appeasement and concession is not one whit different from trying to lessen, say, the excess demand for apples by reducing their prices. Nor does one have to go on exposing the world's well-known Hitlerite traumas to show that *direction* of policy or response is always vital in determining whether or not the whole interaction between forces which "offend" and those which "respond" is self-correcting or destructively explosive.

Is it to be at all wondered at, therefore, that when one recently felt capricious enough to get one's head unstuck from the ground, one could actually perceive that Wheeler Hall had been burned in Berkeley? Predictably, too, when I asked at the time, "Who did it? Have they caught them?", the most popular advice forthcoming was that curiosity killed the cat. By logical extension, I stuck my head in the clouds instead—and, admittedly, all was well for a while. But the shots which had also killed two students on the Los Angeles campus, the subsequent maiming of a secretary at Claremont College in California, the self-blinding of another bomb-carrying student at San Francisco State, the triumph of firearms over scholarship in Cornell etc., etc., have all once again got me "perceiving" things.

Could it be that time has come to consider applying fully the equilibrating laws of the land to student violence and terror—lest, instead, another Berkeley "first" also amounts in the end to the last we hear of the learning process on this good earth?

As Ronald Knox put it:

*There was a young man who said, "God  
Must think it exceedingly odd  
if he finds that this tree  
continues to be  
When there's no one about in the Quad."*

## Letters

### REPLY

Dear Sir:

Your astonishment's odd:  
I am always about in the Quad.  
And that's why the tree  
will continue to be  
Since observed by

Yours faithfully,  
God.

The chaos, in other words, is there. Let's face it.

NICOS E. DEVIOTOGIOT

The London School of Economics and  
University of California, Los Angeles

### Marquand's Politics

I AM GLAD that Mr. David Marquand, M.P., has discovered that the behaviour of the working class electorate in Britain has, on the whole, been conservative, and that this has had its effect upon the character and record of the Labour Party over the years ["The Politics of Deprivation," *ENCOUNTER*, April]. Others before him have long held this view. I used to think that the reason why some circles at the L.S.E. did not share it was because in the Economists' Bookshop books on the Labour Party were classified under the heading "Socialism"! But there have always been some L.S.E. dons who did not share these illusions.

Mr. Marquand should not jump to the conclusion that students of Labour history in what we may now call the pre-Marquand era were all suffering from misconceptions about these matters. As regards my own work, may I ask him to read with care those books of mine which deal specifically with the questions that he raises? The most appropriate one for him now would be my book of essays, *Popular Politics and Society in Late Victorian Britain*. But even an earlier work such as my *Short History of the Labour Party*—based on lectures delivered at Oxford when he was an undergraduate—should help him to see that his views are not entirely novel.

HENRY PELLING

St John's College,  
Cambridge

### Toulmin's "Wittgenstein"

ON READING Michael Lipton's criticism [*ENCOUNTER*, January] of Stephen Toulmin's translation of a passage on Wittgenstein, I immediately recalled my own translation of the same excerpt which, for one reason or the other, I did not dispatch for publication. The translation runs as follows:

Logical analysis and the clarification it implies were unclear to me in the *Tractatus*. I thought at that time that there is a "connexion between Language and Reality."

The second sentence in this translation which agrees with Lipton's reveals a belief held at that time by Wittgenstein independent of the exposition it found, sooner or later, in the *Tractatus*. The extent to which this affects Toulmin's account of Wittgenstein's philosophy is not clear to me. I wish, however, to point out the ambiguity in the German text itself and the fact that the translation which Toulmin has given cannot be accepted as final.

BONIFACE I. C. ONUBOGU

Bonn

I AM ENTIRELY happy with Mr. Onubogu's emendation. The crucial disagreement between Michael Lipton and myself was over the words *hinweisende Erklärung*. To translate these as "ostensive definition" reads into the passage epistemological implications foreign (in my opinion) to Wittgenstein's intention. As an alternative translation, "the clarification it implies" is just right. As for Mr. Onubogu's modifications to my version of the second sentence, these remain in complete harmony with my overall interpretation.

STEPHEN TOULMIN

Oxford

### Late Capitalist Ladders

THE TRANSLATION of an *SIDS* statement on page 33 of your May issue ["The Cult of Violence"] does not make sense. The original read, "*eine spætkapitalistische Klassenjustiz, die eine Frau in der Strumpffabrik bestraft, die Struempfe kauft, nicht die, die aufgrund ihrer Eigentumsrechte die Produktion unzerreissbarer Struempfe verweigern*"—and means: "a late capitalist class justice which punishes a woman in a stockings factory who pinches stockings, but not those who, on the basis of their property rights, refuse to produce non-laddering stockings" i.e. the owners of the stockings factories.

MANFORD BILMORE

Milan

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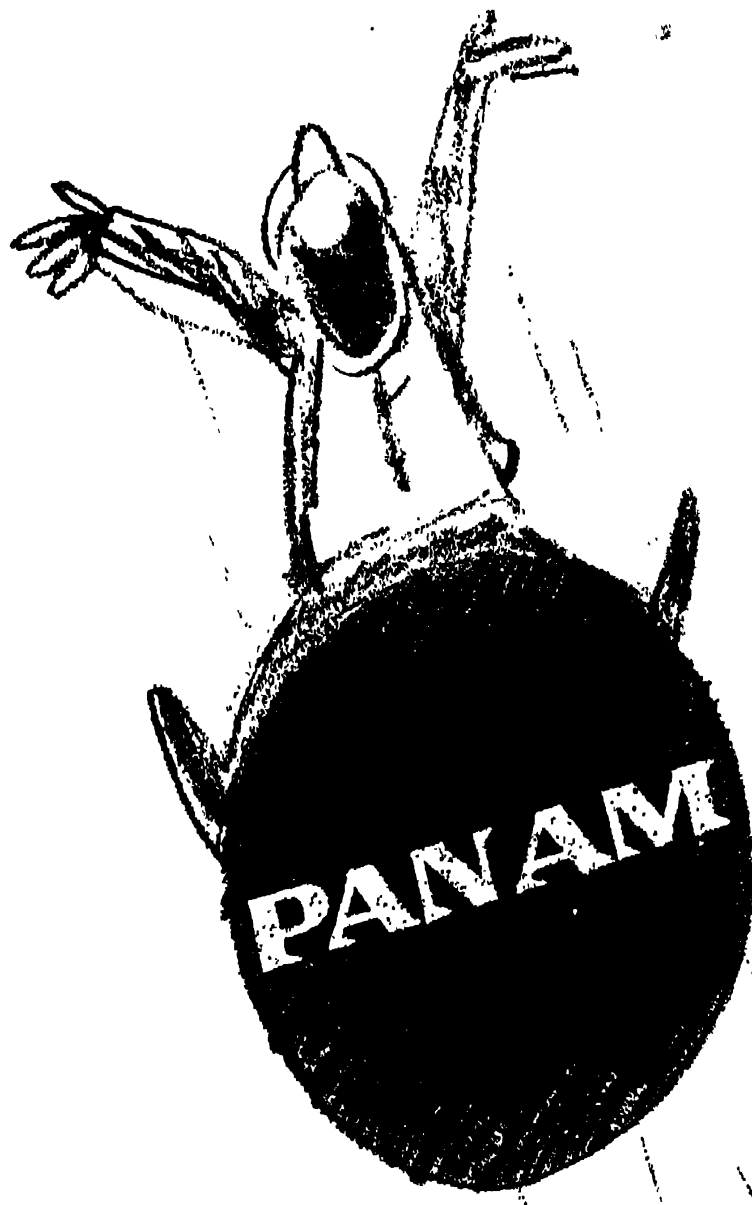
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# Encounter

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*J. G. Ballard*

## *Tolerances of the Human Face*

### **5 MINUTES 3 SECONDS**

LATER, TRAVERS remembered the camera-crew which had visited the Institute, and the unusual documentary they had filmed among the cypress-screened lawns. He had first noticed the unit as he loaded his suitcases into the car on the afternoon he resigned. Avoiding Claire Austin's embarrassed attempt to embrace him, he stepped on to the lawn below the drive. The patients sat like mannequins on the worn grass, while the film-crew moved between them, guiding the camera about like a myopic robot. "Why did Nathan invite them here? For a so-called documentary on dementia praecox it's going to be surprisingly elegant and perverse." Claire Austin strode towards the unit, remonstrating with the director as he pointed a woman patient towards the camera. She took the girl's loose hands. The director stared at her in a bored way, deliberately exposing the chewing gum between his lips. His eyes turned to inspect Travers. With an odd gesture of the wrist, he beckoned the camera-unit forward.

### **HIDDEN FACES**

Travers vaulted over the concrete balustrade and pushed through the swing doors of the lecture theatre. Behind him the film-crew were manhandling their camera trolley across the gravel. Hands on the hips of his white trousers, the director watched Travers with his unpleasant eyes. His aggressive stare had surprised Travers—seeing himself confused with the psychotic patients was too sharp a commentary on his own role at the Institute, a reminder of his long and wearisome dispute with Nathan. In more than one sense he had already left the Institute; the presence of his colleagues, their smallest gestures, seemed an anthology of irritations. Only the patients left him at ease. He crossed the empty seats below the screen. *Each afternoon in the deserted cinema Travers was increasingly disturbed by the images of colliding motor-cars. Epiphanies of his wife's death, the slow-motion newsreels recapitulated all his memories of childhood, the realisation of dreams which even during the safe immobility of sleep would develop into nightmares of anxiety.* He made his way through the exit into the car park. His secretary's car waited by the freight elevator. He touched the dented fender, feeling the reversed contours, the ambiguous junction of rust and enamel, geometry of aggression and desire.



## ***J. G. Ballard***

### **FAKE NEWSREELS**

Claire Austin unlocked the door and followed Travers into the deserted laboratory. "Nathan did warn me not to. . . ." Ignoring her, Travers walked towards the display screens. Disconnected headphones hung inside the cubicles, once occupied by the volunteer panels of students and housewives. Fingers fretting at the key in her pocket, she watched Travers search through the montage photographs which the volunteers had assembled during anaesthesia. Disquieting diorama of pain and mutilation: strange sexual wounds, imaginary Viet Nam atrocities, the deformed mouth of Jacqueline Kennedy. Until Nathan ordered the experiment to end it had become a daily nightmare for her, a sick game which the volunteers had increasingly enjoyed. Why was Travers obsessed by these images? Their own sexual relationship was marked by an almost seraphic tenderness, transits of touch and feeling as serene as the movements of a dune.

### **FROM THE CASUALTY WARD**

Nostalgia of departure. Through the windshield Travers glanced for the last time at the window of his office. The glass curtain-wallling formed an element in a vertical sky, a mirror of this deteriorating landscape. As he released the handbrake a young man in a shabby flying jacket strode towards the car from the freight elevator. He fumbled at the door, concentrating on the latch mechanism like a psychotic patient struggling with a spoon. He sat down heavily beside Travers, beckoning at the steering wheel with a gesture of sudden authority. Travers stared at the flame-like scars on his knuckles, residues of an appalling act of violence. This former day-patient, Vaughan, he had often seen in the back row of his classes, or moving through the other students in the library forecourt at some private diagonal. His committal to the Institute, an elaborate manoeuvre by Nathan as suspect as anything Travers had done, had been a first warning. Should he help Vaughan to escape, whatever that term meant and whatever its limitations? The dented plates of his forehead and the sallow jaw were features as anonymous as any police suspect's. The musculature of his mouth was clamped together in a rictus of aggression, as if he were about to commit a crude and unsavoury crime. Before Travers could speak, Vaughan brushed his arm aside and switched on the ignition.

### **HARD-EDGE**

Dr. Nathan gestured to the young woman to unbutton her coat. With a murmur of surprise he stared at the bruises on her hips and buttocks. "Travers . . . ?" He turned involuntarily to Claire Austin, standing primly by the window. Nodding to himself, he searched the broken blood-vessels in the young woman's skin. She showed no hostility to Travers, at first sight an indication of the sexual nature of these wounds. Yet something about the precise cross-hatching suggested that their true role lay elsewhere. He waited by the window as the young woman dressed. "What these girls carry about under their smiles—you saw her little art gallery?" Claire Austin snapped shut the roller blind. "Extremely conceptual, but hardly in Travers' style. Do you believe her?" Dr. Nathan gestured irritably. "Of course. That's the whole point. He was trying to make contact with her, but in a

new way." A car moved down the drive. He handed the girl a jar of ointment. Somewhere lay a vernissage larger than the skin area of a typist.

### **VETERAN OF THE PRIVATE EVACUATIONS**

Ahead, stalled traffic blocked three lanes. Oxyacetylene flared over the roofs of the police cars and ambulances in a corral at the mouth of the underpass. Travers rested his head against the mud-caked quarter-window. He had spent the past days in a nexus of endless highways, a terrain of billboards, car marts and undisclosed destinations. Deliberately he had allowed Vaughan to take command, curious to see where they would go, what junction-points they would cross on the spinal causeways. Together they set off on a grotesque itinerary: a radio-observatory, stockcar races, war-graves, multi-storey car-parks. Two teen-age girls whom they picked up Vaughan had almost raped, grappling with them in a series of stylised holds. During this exercise in the back seat his morose eyes had stared at Travers through the driving mirror with a deliberate irony imitated from the newsreels of Oswald and Sirhan. Once, as they walked along the half-built embankment of a new motorway, Travers had turned to find Vaughan watching him with an expression of almost insane lucidity. His presence sounded a tocsin of danger and violence. Soon after, Travers became bored with the experiment. At the next filling station, while Vaughan was in the urinal, he drove off alone.

### **ACTUAL SIZE**

A helicopter clattered overhead, a cameraman crouched in the bubble cockpit. It circled the overturned truck, then pulled away and hovered above the three wrecked cars on the verge. Zooms for some new Jacopetti, the elegant declensions of serialised violence. Travers started the engine and turned across the central reservation. As he drove off he heard the helicopter climb away from the accident site. It soared over the motorway, the shadows of its blades scrambling across the concrete like the legs of an ungainly insect. Travers swerved into the nearside lane. Three hundred yards ahead he plunged down the incline of a slip-road. As the helicopter circled and dived again he recognised the white-suited man crouched between the pilot and the camera-operator.

### **TOLERANCES OF THE HUMAN FACE IN CRASH IMPACTS**

Travers took the glass of whisky from Karen Novotny. "Who is Koster? —the crash on the motorway was a decoy. Half the time we're moving about in other people's games." He followed her on to the balcony. The evening traffic turned along the outer circle of the park. The past few days had formed a pleasant no-man's land, a dead zone on the clock. As she took his arm in a domestic gesture he looked at her for the first time in half an hour. This strange young woman, moving in a complex of undefined roles, the gun moll of intellectual hoodlums with her art critical jargon and bizarre magazine subscriptions. He had picked her up in the demonstration cinema during the interval, immediately aware that she would form the perfect modulus for the re-enactment he had conceived. What were she and her fey crowd doing at a conference on facial surgery? No doubt the lectures were listed in the diary pages of *Vogue*, with the professors of

tropical diseases as popular with their clagues as fashionable hairdressers. "What about you, Karen?—wouldn't you like to be in the movies?" With a stiff forefinger she explored the knuckle of his wrist. "We're all in the movies."

### **THE DEATH OF AFFECT**

He parked the car among the over-luminous pines. They stepped out and walked through the ferns to the embankment. The motorway moved down a cut, spanned by a concrete bridge, then divided through the trees. Travers helped her on to the asphalt verge. As she watched, face hidden behind the white fur collar, he began to pace out the trajectories. Five minutes later he beckoned her forward. "The impact point was here—roll-over followed by head-on collision." He stared at the surface of the concrete. After four years the oil stains had vanished. These infrequent visits, dictated by whatever private logic, now seemed to provide nothing. An immense internal silence presided over this area of cement and pipes, a terminal moraine of the emotions that held its debris of memory and regret, like the rubbish in the pockets of a dead schoolboy he had examined. He felt Karen touch his arm. She was staring at the culvert between bridge and motorway, an elegant conjunction of rain-washed concrete forming a huge motion sculpture. Without thinking, she asked: "Where did the car go?" He led her across the asphalt, watching as she re-created the accident in terms of its alternate parameters. How would she have preferred it: in terms of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, the '50s school of highway engineering or, most soigné of all, the Embarcadero Freeway?

### **THE SIX-SECOND EPIC**

Travers waited on the mezzanine terrace for the audience to leave the gallery floor. The Jacopetti retrospective had been a success. As the crowd cleared, he recognised the organiser, a now familiar figure in his shabby flying jacket, standing by a display of Biafran atrocity photographs. Since his reappearance two weeks earlier Vaughan had taken part in a string of modish activities: police brawls, a festival of masochistic films, an obscene play consisting of a nine-year-old girl in a Marie Antoinette dress watching a couple in intercourse. His involvement in these lugubrious pastimes seemed an elaborate gesture, part of some desperate irony. His hostility to Karen Novotny, registered within a few seconds of their first meeting, reflected this same abstraction of emotion and intent. Even now, as he waved to Karen and Travers, his eyes were set in a canny appraisal of her hoped-for wound areas. More and more Travers found himself exposing Karen to him whenever possible.

### **A NEW ALGEBRA**

"Travers asked you to collect these for him?" Dr. Nathan looked down at the photostats which Claire Austin had placed on his desk: (1) Front elevation of multi-storey car-park; (2) Mean intra-patellar distances (estimated during funeral services) of Coretta King and Ethel M. Kennedy; (3) Closeup of the perineum of a six-year-old girl; (4) Voice-print (terminal transmission) of Col. Komarov on the record jacket of a commercial 45; (5) the text of "Tolerances of the Human Face in Crash Impacts." Dr.

Nathan pushed away the tray, shaking his head. "'Fusing Devices'—? God only knows what violence Vaughan is up to—it looks as if Koster's film may have a surprise ending."

### **MADONNA OF THE MULTI-STOREY CAR-PARK**

She lay on her side, waiting as his hands explored the musculature of her pelvis and abdomen. From the TV set came a newsreel of a tank crushing a bamboo hut, for some reason an effort of immense labour. American combat engineers were staring like intelligent tourists at an earth bunker. For days the whole world had been in slow motion. Travers had become more and more withdrawn, driving her along the motorway to pointless destinations, setting up private experiments whose purpose was totally abstract: making love to soundless images of war newsreels, his obsession with multi-storey car-parks (their canted floors appeared to be a model of her own anatomy), his fascination with the mysterious film-crew who followed them everywhere. (What lay behind the antagonism between Travers and the unpleasant young director—some sort of homo-erotic jealousy, or another game?) She remembered the wearying hours outside the art school, as he waited in the car, offering money to any student who would come back to the apartment and watch them in intercourse. Travers had embarked on the invention of imaginary psychopathologies, using her body and reflexes as a module for a series of unsavoury routines, as if hoping in this way to recapitulate his wife's death. With a grimace she thought of Vaughan, forever waiting for them at unexpected junctions. In his face the diagram of bones formed a geometry of murder.

### **INTERNAL ÉMIGRÉ**

All afternoon they had driven along the highway. Moving steadily through the traffic, Travers followed the white car with the fractured windshield. Now and then he would see Vaughan's angular forehead, with its depressed temples, as the young man looked back over his shoulder. They left the city and entered a landscape of pines and small lakes. Vaughan stopped among the trees in a side road. Striding swiftly in his tennis shoes, he set off across the soft floor of pine needles. Travers drew up beside his car. Strange graffiti marked the dust on its trunk and door panels. He followed Vaughan around the shore of an enclosed lake. Over the densely packed trees lay a calm and unvarying light. A large exhibition hall appeared above the forest, part of a complex of buildings on the edge of a university campus. Vaughan crossed the lawn towards the glass doors. As Travers left the shelter of the trees he heard the roar of a helicopter's engine. It soared overhead, the downdraught from its blades whipping his tie across his left eye. Driven back, he traced his steps through the pines. For the next hour he waited by the lake shore.

### **CINECITY**

In the evening air Travers passed unnoticed through the crowds on the terrace. The helicopter rested on the lawn, its blades drooping over the damp grass. Through the glass doors Travers could see into the festival arena, where a circle of cine-screens carried their films above the heads of the audience. Travers walked around the rear gangway, now and then joining in the applause, interested to watch these students and middle-aged

cinephiles. Endlessly, the films unwound: images of neurosurgery and organ transplants, autism and senile dementia, auto-disasters and plane crashes. Above all, the montage landscapes of war and death: newsreels from the Congo and Viet Nam, execution-squad instruction films, a documentary on the operation of a lethal chamber. *Sequence in slow-motion: a landscape of highways and embankments, evening light of fading concrete, intercut with images of a young woman's body. She lay on her back, her wounded face stressed like fractured ice. With almost dream-like calm, the camera explored her bruised mouth, the thighs dressed in a dark lacework of blood. The quickening geometry of her body, its terraces of pain and sexuality, became a source of intense excitement. Watching from the embankment, Travers found himself thinking of the eager deaths of his childhood.*

## TOO BAD

Of this early period of his life, Travers wrote: "Two weeks after the end of World War II my parents and I left Lunghwa internment camp and returned to our house in Shanghai, which had been occupied by the Japanese gendarmerie. The four servants and ourselves were still without any food. Soon after, the house opposite was taken over by two senior American officers, who gave us canned food and medicines. I struck up a friendship with their driver, Corporal Tulloch, who often took me around with him. In October the two colonels flew to Chungking. Tulloch asked me if I would like to go to Japan with him. He had been offered a round trip to Osaka by a quartermaster-sergeant at the Park Hotel occupation headquarters. My father was away on business, my mother too ill to give any thought to the question. The skies were full of American aircraft flying to and from Japan. We left the next afternoon, but instead of going to the Nantao airfield we set off for Hongkew riverfront. Tulloch told me we would go by LCT. Japan was 500 miles away, the journey would take only a few days. The wharves were crammed with American landing craft and supply vessels as we drove through Hongkew. On the mudflats at Yangtze-poo were the huge stockades where the Americans held the last of the Japanese troops being repatriated. As we arrived four LCTs were beached on the bank. A line of Japanese soldiers in ragged uniforms moved along a bamboo pier to the loading ramp. Our own LCT was already loaded. With a group of American servicemen we climbed the stern gangway and went to the forward rail above the cargo well. Below, crammed shoulder to shoulder, were some 400 Japanese, squatting on the deck and looking up at us. The smell was intense. We went to the stern, where Tulloch and the others played cards and I read through old copies of *Life* magazine. After two hours, when the LCTs next to us had set off down-river, an argument broke out between the officers in charge of our ship and the military personnel guarding the Japanese. For some reason we would have to leave the next morning. Packing up, we went by truck back to Shanghai. The next day I waited for Tulloch outside the Park Hotel. Finally he came out and told me that there had been a delay. He sent me off home and said he would collect me the following morning. We finally set off again in the early afternoon. To my relief, the LCT was still berthed on the mud-flat. The stockades were empty.

Two navy tenders were tied up at the stern of the LCT. The deck was crowded with passengers already aboard, who shouted at us as we climbed the gangway. Finally Tulloch and I found a place below the bridge rail. The Japanese soldiers in the cargo well were in a bad condition. Many were lying down, unable to move. An hour later a landing craft came alongside. Tulloch told me that we were all to transfer to a supply ship leaving on the next tide. As we climbed down into the landing craft two Eurasian women and myself were turned away. Tulloch shouted at me to go back to the Park Hotel. At this point one of the soldiers guarding the Japanese called me back on board. He told me that they would be leaving shortly and that I could go with them. I sat at the stern, watching the landing craft cross the river. The Eurasian women walked back to the shore across the mudflats. At eight o'clock that night a fight broke out among the Americans. A Japanese sergeant was standing on the bridge deck, his face and chest covered with blood, while the Americans shouted and pushed at each other. Shortly after, three trucks drove up and a party of armed American military police came on board. When they saw me they told me to leave. I left the ship and walked back through the darkness to the empty stockades. The trucks were loaded with gasoline drums. A week later my father returned. He took me on the Mollar line ferry to the cotton mill he owned on the Pootung shore, two miles down-river from the Bund. As we passed Yanptzepoo the LCT was still on the mudflat. The forward section of the ship had been set on fire. The sides were black, and heavy smoke still rose from the cargo well. Armed military police were standing on the mudflat."

### **"HOMAGE TO ABRAHAM ZAPRUDER"**

Each night, as Travers moved through the deserted auditorium, the films of simulated atrocities played above the rows of empty seats, images of napalm victims, crashing cars and motorcade attacks. Travers followed Vaughan from one projection theatre to the next, taking his seat a few rows behind him. When a party in evening dress came in Travers followed him on to the library floor. As Vaughan leafed through the magazines he listened to the flow of small talk, the suave ironies of Koster and his women. Koster had a face like a fake newsreel.

### **GO, NO-GO DETECTOR**

These deaths preoccupied Travers. *Malcolm X*: the death of terminal fibrillation, as elegant as the trembling of hands in *tabes dorsalis*; *Jayne Mansfield*: the death of the erotic junction, the polite section of the lower mammary curvature by the glass guillotine of the windshield assembly; *Marilyn Monroe*: the death of her moist loins; the falling temperature of her rectum described the first marriage of the cold perineum and the white rectilinear walls of the 20th-century apartment; *Jacqueline Kennedy*: the notional death, defined by the exquisite eroticism of her mouth and the insane logic of her leg-stance; *Buddy Holly*: the capped teeth of the dead pop singer, like the melancholy dolmens of the Brittany coastline, were globes of milk, condensations of his sleeping mind.

### **THE SEX-DEATHS OF KAREN NOVOTNY**

The projection theatre was silent as the last film began. Vaughan had sat

forward. Travers recognised the figures on the screen—Dr. Nathan, Claire Austin, himself. In sequence the rushes of the sex-deaths of Karen Novotny passed before them. Travers stared at the young woman's face, excited by these images of her postures and musculature and the fantasies of violence he had seen in the imaginary newsreels.

### **THE DREAM SCENARIO**

As Travers walked through the pines towards his car he recognised Karen Novotny sitting behind the wheel, fur collar buttoned round her chin. The white strap of her binocular case lay above the dashboard. The fresh scent of the pine needles irrigated his veins. He opened the door and took his seat in the passenger compartment. Karen looked at him with wary eyes. She searched for the ignition switch. "Where have you been?" Travers studied her body, the junction of her broad thighs with the vinyl seat cover, her nervous fingers moving across the chromium instrument heads.

### **CONCEPTUAL GAMES**

Dr. Nathan pondered the list on his desk-pad. (1) The catalogue of an exhibition of tropical diseases at the Wellcome museum; (2) chemical and topographical analyses of a young woman's excrement; (3) diagrams of female orifices: buccal, orbital, anal, urethral, some showing wound areas; (4) the results of a questionnaire in which a volunteer panel of parents were asked to devise ways of killing their own children; (5) an item entitled "self-disgust"—someone's morbid and hate-filled list of himself and his faults. Dr. Nathan inhaled carefully on his gold-tipped cigarette. Were these items in some conceptual game? To Claire Austin, waiting as ever by the window, he said: "Should we warn Miss Novotny?"

### **BIOMORPHIC HORROR**

With an effort, Dr. Nathan looked away from Claire Austin as she picked at her finger quicks. Unsure whether she was listening to him, he continued: "Travers' problem is how to come to terms with the violence that has pursued his life—not merely the violence of accident and bereavement, or the horrors of war, but the biomorphic horror of our own bodies, the awkward geometry of the postures we assume. Travers has at last realised that the real significance of these acts of violence lies elsewhere, in what we might term 'the death of affect.' Consider all our most real and tender pleasures—in the excitements of pain and mutilation; in sex as the perfect arena, like a culture-bed of sterile pus, for all the veronicas of our own perversions, in voyeurism and self-disgust, in our moral freedom to pursue our own psychopathologies as a game, and in our ever-greater powers of abstractions. What our children have to fear are not the cars on the freeways of tomorrow, but our own pleasure in calculating the most elegant parameters of their deaths. The only way we can make contact with each other is in terms of conceptualisations. Violence is the conceptualisation of pain. By the same token, psychopathology is the conceptual system of sex."

### **SINK SPEEDS**

During this period, after his return to Karen Novotny's apartment, Travers was busy with the following projects: A cogent defence of the

documentary films of Jacopetti; a contribution to a magazine symposium on the optimum auto-disaster; the preparation, at a former colleague's invitation, of the forensic notes to the catalogue of an exhibition of imaginary genital organs. Immersed in these topics, Travers moved from art gallery to conference hall. Beside him, Karen Novotny seemed more and more isolated by these excursions. Advertisements of the film of her death had appeared in the movie magazines and on the walls of the underground stations. "Games, Karen," Travers reassured her. "Next they'll have you filmed masturbating by a cripple in a wheel-chair."

## **IMAGINARY DISEASES**

By contrast, for Claire Austin these activities were evidence of an ever-widening despair, a deliberate summoning of the random and grotesque. After their meeting at the exhibition Travers grasped her arm so tightly that his fingers bruised a nerve. To calm him, she read through the catalogue introduction: "Bernouli's *Encyclopaedia of Imaginary Diseases* was compiled during his period as a privat-dozent in Frankfurt. Beginning with the imaginary diseases of the larynx, he proceeded to a number of fictional malfunctions of the respiratory and cardio-vascular systems. Within a few years, as he added the cerebro-spinal system to his encyclopaedia, a substantial invented pathology had been catalogued. Bernouli's monographs on imaginary defects of speech are a classic of their period, equalled only by his series of imaginary diseases of the bladder and anus. His greatest work without doubt is his exhaustive 'imaginary diseases of the genitalia'—his concept of the imaginary venereal disease represents a tour de force of extraordinary persuasion. A curious aspect of Bernouli's work, and one that must not be overlooked, is the way in which the most bizarre of his imaginary diseases, those which stand at the summit of his art and imagination, in fact closely approximate to conditions of natural pathology. . . ."

## **MARRIAGE OF FREUD AND EUCLID**

These embraces of Travers' were gestures of displaced affections, a marriage of Freud and Euclid. Claire Austin sat on the edge of the bed, waiting as his hands moved across her left armpit, as if exploring the parameters of a speculative geometry. In a film magazine on the floor were a series of photographs of a young woman's death postures, stills from Koster's unsavoury documentary. These peculiar geometric elements contained within them the possibilities of an ugly violence. Why had Travers invited her to this apartment above the zoo? The traces of a young woman's body clung to its furniture—the scent on the bedspread, the crushed contraceptive wallet in the desk drawer, the intimate algebra of pillow arrangements. He worked away endlessly on his obscene photographs: left breasts, the grimaces of filling station personnel, wound areas, catalogues of Japanese erotic films: "targeting areas," as he described them. He seemed to turn everything into its inherent pornographic possibilities. She grimaced as he grasped her left nipple between thumb and forefinger: an obscene manual hold, part of a new grammar of callousness and aggression. Koster's eyes had moved across her body in the same transits when she blundered into the film-crew outside the multi-storey car-park. Vaughan had stood on the



parapet beside the crashed car, staring down at her with cold and stylised rapacity.

### **DEATH GAMES (a) CONCEPTUAL**

Looking back at his wife's death, Travers now reconceived it as a series of conceptual games: (1) a stage show, entitled "Crash"; (2) a volume curve in a new transfinite geometry; (3) an inflatable kapok sculpture two hundred yards long; (4) a slide show of rectal cancers; (5) six advertisements placed in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*; (6) a board game; (7) a child's paper-doll books, cut-out tabs mounted around the wound-areas; (8) the notional "pudenda" of Ralph Nader; (9) a set of noise levels; (10) a random collection of dialogue samples, preserved on video-tape, from ambulance attendants and police engineers.

### **DEATH GAMES (b) VIET NAM**

Dr. Nathan gestured at the war newsreels transmitted from the television set. Claire Austin watched from the radiator panel, arms folded across her breasts. "Any great human tragedy—Viet Nam, let us say—can be considered experimentally as a larger model of a mental crisis mimetised in faulty stair angles or skin junctions, breakdowns in the perception of environment and consciousness. In terms of television and the news magazines the war in Viet Nam has a latent significance very different from its manifest content. Far from repelling us, it *appeals* to us by virtue of its complex of polyperverse acts. We must bear in mind, however sadly, that psychopathology is no longer the exclusive preserve of the degenerate and perverse. The Congo, Viet Nam, Biafra—these are games that anyone can play. Their violence, and all violence for that matter, reflects the neutral exploration of sensation that is taking place now, within sex as elsewhere, and the sense that the perversions are valuable precisely because they provide a readily accessible anthology of exploratory techniques. Where all this leads one can only speculate—why not, for example, use our own children for all kinds of obscene games? Given that we can only make contact with each other through the new alphabet of sensation and violence, the death of a child or, on a larger scale, the war in Viet Nam, should be regarded as for the public good." Dr. Nathan stopped to light a cigarette. "Sex, of course, remains our continuing preoccupation. As you and I know, the act of intercourse is now always a model for something else. What will follow is the psychopathology of sex, relationships so lunar and abstract that people will become mere extensions of the geometries of situations. This will allow the exploration, without any taint of guilt, of every aspect of sexual psychopathology. Travers, for example, has composed a series of new sexual deviations, of a wholly conceptual character, in an attempt to surmount this death of affect. In many ways he is the first of the new naïves, a Douanier Rousseau of the sexual perversions. However consoling, it seems likely that our familiar perversions will soon come to an end, if only because their equivalents are too readily available in strange stair angles, in the mysterious eroticism of fly-overs, in distortions of gesture and posture. At the logic of fashion, such once-popular perversions as paedophilia and sodomy will become derided clichés, as amusing as pottery ducks on suburban walls."

## **CHASE SEQUENCE**

As the helicopter roared over their heads again, Travers and Karen Novotny ran towards the shelter of the overpass. Karen stumbled over a wooden trestle, falling across the concrete. She held her bloodied left palm up to Travers, her face in a grimace of stupidity. Travers took her arm and pulled her on to the unset cement between the pillars of the overpass. The cleats of Vaughan's tennis shoes had left a line of imprints ahead of them, tracks which they were helplessly following. Vaughan was stalking them like the nemesis of some over-lit dream, always in front of them as they tried to escape from the motorway. Travers stopped and pushed Karen to the ground. The helicopter was coming after them below the deck of the overpass, blades almost touching the pillars, like an express train through a tunnel. Through the bubble canopy he could see Koster crouched between the pilot and camera-man.

## **CHE AS PRE-PUBERTAL FIGURE**

*Travers stood awkwardly in front of the student volunteers. With an effort, he began: "The imaginary sex-death of Che Guevara—very little is known about Guevara's sexual behaviour. Psychotic patients, and panels of housewives and filling station personnel were asked to construct six alternate sex-deaths. Each of these takes place within some kind of perversion—for example, bondage and concentration camp fantasies, auto-deaths, the obsessive geometry of walls and ceilings. Some suggestions have been made for considering Che as a pre-pubertal figure. Patients have been asked to consider the notional 'child-rape' of Che Guevara..." Travers stopped, aware for the first time of the young man sitting in the back row. Soon he would have to break with Vaughan. In his dreams each night Karen Novotny would appear, showing her wounds to him.*

## **"WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT?"**

Travers walked along the embankment of the overpass. The concrete slope ran on into the afternoon haze. Karen Novotny followed a few steps behind him, absently picking at the spurs of grass in her skirt. "An erotic film—of a special kind." Somewhere in the margins of his mind a helicopter circled, vector in a scenario of violence and desire. He counted the materials of the landscape: the curvilinear perspectives of the concrete causeways, the symmetry of car fenders, the contours of Karen's thighs and pelvis, her uncertain smile. What new algebra would make sense of these elements? As the haze cleared he saw the profile of the multi-storey car-park rising above them. A familiar figure in a shabby flying jacket watched from the roof. Travers let Karen walk past him. As she sauntered along the verge he became aware of a sudden erotic conjunction, the module formed by Vaughan, the inclined concrete decks and Karen's body. Above all, the multi-storey car-park was a model for her rape.

## **TREBLINKA**

Cement dust rose from the wheels of the approaching car. Travers held Karen's arm. He pointed to the ramp. "Go up to the roof. I'll see you there later." As she set off he ran out into the road, signalling to the driver. Through the windshield he could see Claire Austin's white knuckles on the

steering wheel, Dr. Nathan cupping his ears for the sounds of the helicopter. As Claire Austin reversed and drove the heavy saloon down the slip road Travers walked back to the car-park. After a pause he strolled towards the stairway.

### **THE FILM OF HER DEATH**

Dr. Nathan pushed back the metal door of the elevator head. Before stepping into the overheated sunlight on the roof he nursed the bruise on his left ankle. Vaughan had burst from the elevator doors like some ugly animal sprung from a trap. The noise of the helicopter's engine had faded fractionally. Shielding his head from the down-draught, he stepped on to the roof. The aircraft was rising vertically overhead, its camera trained on the body of a young woman lying in the centre of the deck. The black bilateral parking lines formed a complex diagonal structure around her. Holding his throat with one hand, Dr. Nathan stared at the body. He turned to look behind him. Travers was standing by the elevator head, gazing with reflective eyes at the body on the white concrete slope, jetsam of this terminal beach. Nodding to Nathan, he walked to the elevator.

### **LAST SUMMER**

For Travers, these afternoons in the deserted cinema were periods of calm and rest, of a reappraisal of the events which had brought him to the multi-storey car-park. Above all, these images from Koster's film reminded him of his affection for the young woman, discovered after so many disappointments within the darkness of this projection theatre. At the conclusion of the film he would go out into the crowded streets. The noisy traffic mediated an exquisite and undying eroticism.

*J. Lavery*

Now being be able  
to see we may say  
from then onwards  
I was arcadian  
I rabelaisian  
I human  
I alive

## Partita 7

Ehi songular singman sing

Put off the wireless  
sped spaced the pool park  
Pigeons gulls gave change of music  
Beasts still bestial  
such as allowed  
scrabbled pecked kissed  
travelled brown waters  
oar paddles sinking among them  
like bread  
between wind stripe sifts  
of streels of sun  
one white there its light  
in the eyes of the finches  
struggle with lumberous twig  
and the rings of the girls  
lain still as they played  
at creation  
under the kite straying  
rattle of pram bells  
on wormless grey earthbake  
prints grass marks on elbows  
and bounce of dogs among bounding  
balls  
then trickle through fences  
diverted by cakewaste

\*

4 streams meet  
like fenceless crossroads  
of new silver  
some blue dust on  
4 dun cow fields

Not delight  
in remembered—  
statistic fact  
this act that  
of what's named life  
has been achieved  
classed numbered listed  
filed away for reference

Did it  
to have done it  
Satisfied  
by being about to have been  
sometimes  
or often

Usually smoke  
off allotments  
in August evenings

Are less only  
in our awe  
when sure we've done  
at least some of the deeds  
Are less alone  
to know we were  
when we were (?)

So peer out from  
the box of death  
the lodging glazed  
sedan chair

Boy blackbird  
feed gape peck  
of girl ditto  
chewed apple  
both move like  
tickertape

The crystal tube's  
impenetrable clarity  
cold sat meltless  
in the brain's bronze blaze

\*

After midnight  
reed music  
transists the allwave  
wireful wireless  
cranial reach  
of search complaint  
and everloss  
Cry of fowled winds  
scouring original waters  
Cry of town soil  
bears strange substance  
Cry before the person was  
Sound which no shape  
may disguise  
Lone flight  
glide rise  
in spiral air  
and aftersun

\*

3 forms of man  
superficially  
halved by light  
like 3 odd moons  
to day and night  
White glacier sprawls  
of shirted rib  
and forearmcd sleeve  
funneled backs'  
dim rifts of spine  
hip mass glooms pale  
return dark underknee-  
crease wrinkle re-entrant  
Socketing shoes foot angles  
on bar stools Beer  
bright beside elbows

Less mooned along right  
lean pelvic guitar  
u-headed  
gives shoulderblades  
volume pose  
less taut in angle  
kneebend coathang  
no nap on cloth grey  
cap grey cheek grey  
no health of fattening  
wealth or shine  
or braces' grasping  
strain at girth

The same sun Solomon sang  
now wining dark some easter sea  
now rosy fingering peace  
into some dreamer's haunt  
and haunt on other waker's dream  
the same sun longed for  
by seeds in Kergulen  
and Patagonian skins  
travels the Bishopsgate diesel fume  
to them and the filthy birthmark floor  
gives visible shape size  
strength matter etc. . . . and passage  
for words to slip out  
the 3 lip holes  
disturbance of air  
into ear crannies' coil-whorl  
intro music box  
vegetal clink tink—  
this fantastic activity  
where stones could be  
long reeds the gone tree rotted  
stopped stopping rain decay  
or raw ray void  
of long sent star hiss  
and rainbow essence's peppering violence  
this fantastic banality  
easing a few gratuitous grunt 'I  
don't want to know' self-  
congratulationisms—

hazed Spanish Main gleams  
of Columbus/Magellan's timbered stateroom  
glass leads flagons goblets  
vanillaed strip neon  
sucrescent with flute whine  
through fizzes of static  
fazing to fade the front of the box  
weak peppered with dots  
of lesser costlier distilled rainbow  
discharging suggestions  
by moonday and moon night  
of volumes and actions  
of forms elsewhere  
elsewhere maintained  
to grimace the guilty luck  
of the 3 full ones  
and lie against the napless  
unheard unword . .  
. . superficially

\*

How white  
bare snow  
on bare hills  
One curve of black pine  
on a hump in a valley  
Nearer  
two dark holly blocks  
Away round the brow rim  
grey hair night rolling

*Lyman Andrews*

## The Lesson

Messieurs & Mesdames:

take a

tin bowl (institutional green)  
a cracked plaster wall  
a few bugs

a drooling clock

the kind that lathers its jaws  
on the hour  
with meaningless syllables

repeated on the half-hour by a clerk

an old soldier  
who hunches by a glowing heater  
& unravels the yarn of forgotten wars

(lest we forget)

take a

rotting garden  
containing an official statue  
of plaster-of-Paris

who waits endlessly for the birds to return  
her head

take all this & stir with a bayonet

to produce

a stew flavoured with rust  
(old tanks, shrapnel  
patriotism)

which when served up

to the boy & girl who like  
love new films pop  
poems

produces a cathartic

which drastic though it is  
serves them excellently  
(& secures for the chef

a cordial handshake across the sea

plus a governmental award of the highest honour

for valiant action  
against the disease  
"La Pensée"

by confining it

to ever decreasing  
circles

ending in zero)

*D. J. Enright*

## Clouds of Something

One's thoughts ascend the gamut  
From A to B;  
Feelings romp from A to C  
Before they're caught and beaten silly.  
Visibility is poor.

And to speak less metaphorically  
One lives in a cloud of unknowing,  
Having reached a new high of  
Sixty cigarettes and half an ounce of pipe tobacco  
a day

Plus an occasional gift cigar—

Which sounds like high living,  
Though what one means is,  
It isn't.  
There's much more smoke than fire,  
More fug than warmth.

A flicker of velleity  
Here and there, and maybe  
An Olympic torch smartly snuffed out  
At the price of a slightly burnt finger  
And more smoke.

(To think they outlawed opium smoking!  
What was the objection now?)

It's easy  
To be uselessly active when you can't see.  
My, the things that go on in clouds!—  
It's a perpetual cocktail party.

It's only too easy  
To write enigmatic verses.  
The affluent state for writers!—  
Dipping your pen into one of  
Numberless and seemingly bottomless clouds.  
The climate, as we call it,  
Of the time,  
Sure that we've caught it firmly, justly, clearly.

*Nicholas Snowden Willey*

## In the Enduring Vicinity

*(Dedicated to the memory of W. A. Bentley, photographer of snow crystals).*

I like the lively way in which a stoat  
Is clearly not a hedgehog; but I'm moved  
By a notion to which I'm deeply attached,  
That the sleek solution of a stoat,  
And the prickly rebuff of the hedgehog,  
Are metaphors for the same idea,  
In which their little worlds and mine are met.  
Men can never realise it or forget.

Here is a butterfly who in bright sunlight  
Spans a great universe with his wings,  
Now buoyant with identity and joy,  
A life in the day of a butterfly,  
Those flashing demarcations soon must merge  
To more final colours, and to shades more deep,  
Where at the tips of those worldly wings  
The night will soon begin its powder.

When it would be snowing, someone called Bentley  
Would sometimes apprehend a snowflake or two.  
He intercepted their progress by placing  
A smooth black board in the saunter of the snow.  
When some snowflakes had settled distinctly there  
He sheltered them, but didn't enlarge himself  
On the question of warmth, for his visitors  
Would have turned into drops of water.

He persuaded the snowflakes to undergo  
A microscope's small scrutiny,  
And then the fixity of his camera.  
And Bentley, over unassuming years,  
Obtained a myriad of images  
That were from his snowflakes, or that were at least  
From somewhere through the snowflakes. And each image  
Seen in sequence was hexagonal.

It was just as if one single idea  
Just kept on coming to light in the snow.  
Whatever it was, Bentley left it there,  
Concluding nothing; and I am moved  
To argue with Winter, by a restlessness  
Which is a reluctance to conclude,  
Lest the seasons are too conclusive with me,  
And conclude in me with some finality.

In the woodlands the roots are bent upon darkness.  
Sunlight breaks through deciduous undergrowth  
And the natives come whooping through the clearing  
To salute the glow that generates their day.  
The wind disperses their cries in the air.  
But there are notions in the upper air,  
Notions that the sunlight doesn't care,  
Notions of the times most untimely.

Through the climate of our apprehension  
A shaft of sunlight finds its dusty way.  
An alarm clock rends the air. Sunlight disturbs  
The curtains of an apartment, and a haze  
Of indifference seeps into the room.  
There are strange notions in the upper air,  
Notions of sunlight's authority,  
Notions of the times most untimely.

The Norsemen understood that the bright stars  
Were where great warriors had cut their way  
Through the terrible confines of the dark.  
Nor was this achieved by pure imagining.  
Sticklers for proof could readily be shown,  
As the great fighter was disguised as smoke,  
Someone broke through the dome of the dark,  
A bright new star shone in the silent sky.

Impenetrable spheres were once ordained  
Where the stars were permitted to revolve  
To God's glory; but a crouching man  
Peered through a telescope, and saw the stars  
Roaring on their ways, cold and unmoved  
By the proud invitation of the earth.  
The lawless stars were suddenly near,  
Roaring in the chasm of the air.

The steadfast stars were only in the sky  
Seen through apprehensions and belief,  
And the roaring stars were only in the sky  
Envisaged through telescopes and belief.  
And they say stars are things imagined to be  
At unimaginable distances.  
In time they have been holes in the shell of the night.  
What's happened to them is what's happened to us.

What of language, our fabled vantage ground  
Beyond the unconscious greenery?  
That's only the language of our aggregate world.  
Beyond our sparing schema there's the world  
Where bees enlighten gardens, and the dying seagull  
Welcomes the attention of the wave.  
And the consonants of the night are troubled  
By white question marks, falling, falling.



The view one commands for the moment,  
There one perceives one's own prospect,  
There lends one's own colours, my own colours,  
And your own colours, weaving among them  
Deeper colours, our lively proceedings  
Like strands on a loom, all my bright colours,  
Woven in some deeper darker weave,  
Resolved in some final iridescence.

When diffusion displays design, which is it,  
A pattern discerned, or discernment patterned?  
Let it not matter from where the pattern came,  
Let it not matter if projected there  
From blue translucency within the skull,  
Blue flickering through memory's mesh,  
Let it not matter if there perceived,  
A clear beam streaming in through frosted glass.

Between the green perceptive terminal  
And the dark blue terminal of dreams,  
There is a current that vibrates in us.  
In isolation's cold severe light  
This current is dismemberment.  
But in the glow of all entirety  
It's the living frisson, and so one finds  
Pointed rejection where another finds home.

There's such pain when sensibility  
For the sudden moment is distinct, as when  
The imperishable beginnings of a tree  
Find their expression in the baffling brief brightness  
Of their fleeting leaves, and this same lively wind  
That stirs identity in every leaf,  
Also stirs the auspices of Autumn,  
And a great sense of sadness.

The ways of metaphor are like alleys.  
Between two quarters of reality.  
To see our progress in the light of the leaves,  
To see pity in the light of the rain,  
Is to ourselves return to lost beginnings,  
Consolidating the fictive flashes  
Into the formative light, the prime mover,  
The notion imprimis, the first idea.

Bright leaves and dim branches contend in a debate  
Not to be concluded. Surely the truth  
Can never depend on a high surveyance  
That makes of tangled greenery a zone?  
But perhaps on finding shelter in a wood.  
We are the degree to which the first idea  
Is human, and the snow is the degree to which  
The first idea is white and silent.

## Today's Lesson : An Observation

Today let's catch some common crawlies. First we'll place traps in likely places—long grass, bushes, by bricks—burying jars in the earth till only their lips show. By morning we'll have a large collection to observe. Time then to construct wormeries and glass vivariums.

The field was threadbare from football and dried by a long summer. Ants welled up from the earth, crazily into bright day. Pop-eyed we bombed them amongst their red brethren and waited for war. Then an ambush for a dazzled earwig—its body gobbled by the dusty backed ants! And green, juicy caterpillars—dozens!—herded into a chalk corral and those that crossed the line—pulped! The perimeter gradually swamped in yellow pus!

Wormeries are possible in bell jars. Earth layers, thus, stony soil, up through clay to garden dirt. The worms will slowly ravel this, and don't let the children maltreat life, however mean. We can show its beauty through a glass pane. Take for instance this woodlouse and note its graceful ways.

It seemed we grew from violence to violence. A rat on a tip caught broadside with a brick. Arrows, steel headed, thwacked heart deep into a pond toad. All those sun dried deaths and moony actions. Our secret tortures and dreams of graveyard murders—yet we left humans well alone!

Well, now, coffee, but first a chance to see some group activity, Ah, Miss Thing, alright? Observe the work! The care that I can only name as love!

Oh yes, they work. Pinafores in white, like surgeons, they handle mice attentively, learning that what's good for smaller fry is fine for us, and how to make the educated guess when things go wrong. And their desire to scatter limbs like straw? They smile and answer breathily—in fact more free than my lot. But coffee calls. Now will some cherub test a beetle's back and stare intently as the shard cracks in her hand? Miss Thing, I think, would

know. Some tautness in her smile tells tales of  
blood before we ambled on this scene. Her  
eyes recount an ancient gothic story,  
printed in blood, staked out deep in the heart.

*Poem Note:* A group of teachers, on a refresher course,  
spend a day at the ideal school.

*Keith Bosley*

## Journey to Kythrea

After delays, frustrations, prayers to saints  
we are off, roaring at the horizon.  
The sky purples as we leave  
ribbed lands and rising seas behind  
pushing the air

        This is the journey  
to Kythrea, the place of origin  
the spring your father swam in  
the tree his father planted

                        Soon the descent  
to darkness, a quick dark  
turning into it, resetting our watches  
calculating

        At the dockside  
stands a crane, rusty, derelict  
stuck in its disconnected tracks  
its jib to the hot stars. Late, late  
we sit by it and wait for our ship.

                        Go  
said the doctor, go on your holiday  
forget all about this  
                as if we could  
and come back in a month or so.

She is ready and we go aboard  
to bad accommodation  
                        a raised bed  
with a table beside it  
and by the wall

                        two small blue cylinders (N<sub>2</sub>O)  
                        and a larger black one

Clank  
        the chains fall away and we move  
out into the dark, this dark the consequence  
of purple  
        and the people in her grumbling  
—Greek, her captain Greek, Italian  
that amorous mariner who fell  
for the Rhys-Thomas girl who fell  
for your maternal grandfather, some French  
but little English until now: he stamps  
the image of his realm, his coming kingdom  
on the heart—hear him hammer, feel the coin

contract

        The prow dips, the sea  
darker than wine, blooddark  
curling pale at the edges, night's frontier  
an oar's length off

                        Through straits, but these are no  
straits: the ship glides between mountains into  
                        dawn

past a white church to starboard, cupolas  
silver to the sun, kerchiefed women  
waving

        Into the first port of call, the first nightfall  
afloat. Out into the dead town, a sedative  
a third of the way

                        —Stroke the moist belly, control  
the peaks of his coming, dream of stroking  
dream of delivery, wake to a servitude  
of broken waters, she is still in chains.

The point of morning, fading of the drug  
new point of pain

                        and off again  
under the sun, our watches measuring  
the main

0834: 65 seconds

0846: 70 seconds

0857: 45 seconds

0902: 35 seconds

curving between islands, but no promise of  
landfall

1423: 60 seconds

1436: 40 seconds

1438: 75 seconds

—the passengers growing restless, the ship  
overcrowded, the air conditioning  
broken down, air, air, the loudspeakers  
calling for a doctor

1605: 60 seconds

1613: 25 seconds

no further: yet still she threads islands  
tightening into another night, rounding  
the last headland in a storm, flashes  
but no thunder, slither of vomit

on deck, old women in black shawls praying  
into the heaving dark

the last headland  
past, and poor rest until the second dawn.  
This is the journey to Kythrea—not Kythera  
for that is the place of rotting men:  
this is the place of ripening, this  
the last lap across open sea  
now, calm.

*Truly*  
*I dwell in a god's throat*

—and will he  
reject me .

Still the god, the king  
labours but will not ride into his own  
and still the good ship cleaves, will cleave  
and still the oars will not beat steady

and she runs  
downwind, listing in no gale, sick  
with no sickness, her godly cargo slipped  
into deep transverse arrest.

So we

watch her, and can do nothing  
but radio for help, fly doleful flags  
and try to comfort

till the tall sun swings  
westward

and little boats announce Kythrea  
and harbour perilous we have heard about  
and here, in her self straits, yet must she pause  
—the stray hair a long wrinkle in her neck—  
and be relieved of the divinity  
she cannot drop herself, her draught is too  
deep

And still in her high seas they lift  
lower her load out from under her sleep  
and bear him yelling suddenly away.

This is Kythrea where she smiles asleep  
the mariners have gone ashore from her  
she rocks at anchor in the bay

*Here end*  
*the works of the sea the works of love.*

## Warwick Collins

*In the long bone of the nave*  
*The wind is saying Vespers*

*In the primitiveness of the early hours*  
*Silence ruled the eyelids of this room*

*In the centre stood the chair,*  
*Possessed by a Cathedral silence*  
*Old, thin, inviolate,*  
*Unaccepted by the gloom.*

*And it seemed that the cold crept*  
*Into the bone-chambers of this silent man*  
*So that he shivered slightly*  
*And drew his overclothes more closely about him.*

## I Robustus

In nerve white coasts of mist and moon  
The heron flowers, like a ghost in bloom  
Into the deeply beating air,  
And in two moving winds of flame,  
The flame above, the wind beneath,  
Draws closer now into my breath.

*The sun was very cold that night*  
*And the shadows were heavy as water.*  
*He remembered Bayswater.*

Mists from the river fill these ancient places.  
The people are few, and worse, indoors,  
In arm chairs and in warmth,  
Pipe-bowls fit the groove of every hand,  
And teak cabinets,  
And all the great hateful paintings  
With tradition in crumbling pigment.  
Out there, where the mist lies draped on the cold  
iron railings,  
Where the ash flakes off the granite,

And the rector slips beneath the arch,  
This cathedral street, chin on chest,  
Sleeps silently in the great arm-chair,  
And the fires burn low,  
And it sleeps on,  
And the pipe smokes still on the arm-rest,  
But very slightly.

The heron, blanketing through mist and milk  
Strokes the moon with profound fingers,  
Tips to one side  
And in a float-and-heart movement,  
Alights in the feet of its shadow.

*On the broken legs of shadows  
The church is standing now.  
Meaning by meaning, on the carven leather,  
In the wooded dark, the reverend moon  
Pours its liquid heart along the aisle.  
And the shadows hold black communion  
And the cold is a silent congregation.*

*On the broken legs of shadows  
The rows of pews are kneeling now.  
And the moon is praying on their shoulders  
The moon shines on their praying shoulders.*

Though my body is priested with candles  
And my coffin is candled by prayers  
I live in the name of sulphur,  
Child, my coldest parts are with you soon.

*And he turns to the wall  
Though hand and sheet and broken wing  
oppose him where he lies,  
He turns to the wall and stares  
Through memories so old, that if one lingers  
The mind encounters  
A breath of cobweb on the fingers.*

## II

Time  
Chimes its swallows from the ghosten brass  
Under the trembling mirrors, a heart  
Groined with gloom and iron sighs  
Winter and summer laid four tones apart  
Moans the bell in your empty thighs.  
Under the hiss and dream of riding metal  
Hands and rumours stroke the bell's spine  
Swings the iron maiden

*The bell leans on its own vast sound,  
Tolling the air in the empty fields*

In this coffin there lies dead  
No lisping word or fairy hand  
No empty eye or page in the rain  
No coffin carrying ant, no grip of jaws  
But a space enclosed, and that is all

And from its scent the pure decline  
The pure whose whitened faces shine  
In slow half light between the trees,  
The pure  
Who nailed it with rusting truths  
The pure who gently closed the lid  
The pure who sang the funeral songs  
The pure who did as they were bid

Under the morning  
Under the hill that the wind has fleshed with  
flowers

The minister, thin,  
Dog-collar, placenta,  
Hands of wax and wings of silk  
Strokes the words from the book with his peace-  
keeping voice.

Around the humped clay, crabbed with cancer  
Stand the false emotions, bleating like pins  
In the raw wind that is blowing down the nerve  
That sanes and pales in the grasses  
And makes the minister, thin candle-flame figure  
Flicker and go tall.

*Under the bell with the silent brass  
Under the hill with the faces of rain  
Whispers the wanton wind in the grave grass  
And every blade is a cry of pain.*

## II

In nerve white coasts of mist and moon  
The heron, holding foot-and-ankle time  
Fishes in my window.

## III

Ribbed with anger  
I call for a sword  
And they give me a pen.

Elate with pain  
I call for water  
And they give me a tear.

I call for light  
And am favoured with a cold sun  
Like the reflection on a Northern lake.

In this continent of mirrors  
Time, whose flesh is cool  
Holds my reflection in a blade.

Shout  
And feel, even in blessing  
The dead weight of the Father's hand  
The long, wolf-bearded bones of the father  
The unbodied wind, the unhousted bell.

Shout  
And the silence  
Seated in an arm chair in Bayswater  
Opened one eye slowly, for he had been disturbed  
And then went back to sleep.

Shout  
And by the measure of that sound  
Define the words within whose walls you lie.

Shout  
And the shout, climbing rib and wind and sky  
Raises questions to the moon

Shout till the long bell's shaking on its knees  
Shout till the word forms a bone in the throat  
Shout till the shoulderblades are rattling on the spine  
And the clock struck nine, and I struck back.

Shout  
*And the candle flickers, the heart  
Tips to one side,  
And the blood bursts black on the brain.*

#### IV

*In the formal rooms, Grace  
And the stiff breaking of the sentence.*

To those who see their purpose in a ring of stone  
To those who see no shadows in the vowel  
No consonants are angled on their bone  
No window shapes a meaning on their brain  
And all the words are such a thin, grey rain  
To the cold floating of the uncommitted bowel  
They fall, and die, and cause no pain.

*In big, black-hearted chairs  
All the crumbling, bloodless, hunch-backed fires  
Are seated like toads in the grates.*

#### V

Time by, years before the heron  
Wading in the slack tides of my blood stream  
Stabbed at my secrets

I laid broad bosomed Autumn in an open field  
In yielding grasses  
Held her in the east and the west  
As close as a cry in the night.

And Hazel, who lived on shortbread and sin,  
Claw-hold knowing,  
(This is the place where she married our flames)  
Relieved me of my trembling trousers  
And kissing me beneath the wounds,  
I've wanted so much to break her sweet neck  
With gentle fingers.  
Hammers and anvils  
The moon in her navel  
Thoughts and shadows and webs

*He tuned her hard and high  
And the music followed in his fingers*

When gut met gut and the sound was good  
We loved forever where we stood.  
When gut met gut, and burned and strained  
A storm was born within the wood  
That in the wordless smoke of music  
Turned  
And loved forever where we stood

Loved dressed the curtains in a body of wind  
Loved shaped a meaning on the brain  
The hard bud freezing in the hand  
One mouth to part the curtains of her pain

And pleasure, for she  
Who once was a child with a nun in her face  
Commits each crime in harmony  
Each soft obsession in the curve.

Yet  
She saw herself in other people's eyes  
Mirrored in reaction to her gaze  
And lived her life in other people's minds,

Lady, though I told no lies  
This thought alone had made you blaze.

*And if in her the white flame stood so high  
For this man's changeable diseases*

Her body was a softer flame  
That warms me now and where I lie.

#### VI

All I asked was a craving for words  
And a pain in the flesh to keep me upright  
And the wind in my crotch (for I must be a saint)  
For these were the meanings that gave voice to light.

*Spine taut between the blades  
With long and steady step rung iron on bone  
Doors slammed beneath him as he walked  
Down the long declension of the stone.*

I who in a small cry conceived  
A pain too rich to breathe or give  
Gave breath to sentences.

*There was a time when he  
Though his friends might not agree,  
Came forward on his chair  
A thought held in his fingertips.*

No hand could touch the blood red bell  
That clamoured meanings through my veins

*There was a time when he  
By a certain timed construction could  
Break God into every word  
Clock light the face of summer's blood.*

## VII

*Alone among windows, the loud sea shines  
He is drunk among gestures*

*Behind the lighted lid  
Where dwells the word that reasons with the eye  
He drinks each room of liquid in the glass  
Drinks from the glass till the rooms of his eyes  
Are peopled with laughter and rafted with  
smoke.*

*He tilts the taste upon the tongue  
Unknowing of the weather on the skin  
The surge and clash of colour on the ear  
And talks behind a broken hand  
The language of the broken word.*

*Alone among windows the loud sea shines.*

*Wind came  
And shutters slapped the wind  
And the wind coughed and the light went out,  
And rain rose  
Like panic in a flock of birds  
And wheeled its clattering spokes across the panes.*

## VIII

*I tear a star in the abdomen  
Of my body, prose and sentence  
And a spider runs out of the wound*

*And his sun was a flame that gave no heat  
(Though it was bright on the bony hillsides  
And could plough the streets with shadow)  
His sun was a flame that gave no heat.*

*And his thoughts not harsh now  
But move in easy rivers through the year  
And words on which the meanings form  
In the slow half motion of the forming tear  
And light pours gently, like the light of dawn.*

*No thunder's bone, tracing fire to the nerve  
Blue lights the sinew (the breath depending now  
On each subtle hingeing of the rib).*

*No more may the smoke rise off his sentences  
For the words are drowning in his voice,  
Their bodies cough between his thoughts*

*And he forever lives the answer.*

## IX

*Sleep took his mind between her thighs.  
Sleep lead him to the blind side of the brain  
To the soft, sensual wound in the lips  
Kissed him in the gills and made him warm*

*In the sound of her voice  
In the house of her arms  
In the low tongue notes of the feinted bell  
He turns through a sea of black roses  
Through salt shaker waves and the torn-up moon  
Turns and snorts and dreams in black pastures*

*And in these quiet times  
When thought and bell and mood  
Surface on the wordless waters  
He dreamed*

*Death kissed him in the breast bone  
Stove in his ribs  
And in the suck of the sinking cage  
Water bubbled through his broken timbers*

*The wreckage distributed like seed*

*And he woke to the smell of morning in the eye.*

*But in the measured light I see  
The flowers arranged in pity.  
Behind each moving crow of hands  
A blade of faces stare,  
My body coughing, for I fear  
To lie in windless symmetry.*

*These quiet bones confine me*

*To one sterile sector of ceiling  
To one hovering rubber plant  
To one obtrusive wooden chair, standing lifeless  
On the green linoleum.*

*Preferring not to die, mirror by mirror  
Meaning by meaning in the shaded glass  
He holds this small occasion  
In a bony cage of fingers.*

*In the turning dust that lives in sunlight  
In the cold dripping light in the misted morning  
glass  
This room is buried lightly, under leaves.*

*And the sun shone through a weeping window  
Shone upon his praying shoulders  
Shone through his kneeling heart.*

X

Turn to the hand that fathered the brain  
To the bone that mothered the mind  
Whispers man the shadow  
Shadows man the wall  
The wall is full of meaning  
But has no blood at all.

And the page is still a window  
Not an answer on its own  
And the word is three-dimensioned  
And casts a shadow on the hand  
And the hand, being so long-winded  
Catches handfuls as they run.

*A sudden ice-wind,  
Sun-cold from the glass hills  
Too rare to touch  
Too tall to see the shallow colour of its blood  
Panics the shutters.*

Before my heart, shaking like a fish  
Flutters redly in the heron's beak  
I who eat the soul out of paper  
I who bite the quick, cruel thoughts off the nail  
Name the hunted now.

The quarry, running smooth and hoofless  
In the shadows of the mind  
Knows his void well  
Knows his sky as true as any gull

And the poet,  
Groping in the mists of consciousness  
Must flush these birds with meditation.  
Probing deeper into darkness  
A final plunge—  
A random image, grasped slippery in his hands  
And he must drag it screaming into the bright  
light  
Of remembrance,  
Force it through his arms and fingers  
Into the fluted pen  
And stain the barren page before him with the  
blue blood of slaughter.

*The poet in his closing cage  
The poet blind  
The poet blind beneath the cage  
Sees the world through the eyes of the word.*

*Forgive him for the way he dies  
When he has nothing left to say  
For this Third Eye lets in the wind  
And his soul has blown away.*

*Emyr Humphreys*

## Poet of the Old North

*[E bore duw Sadiwrn cad fawr a fu . . .]*

Saturday morning a great battle began  
Blood shed as long as the day lasted

Their mouths were filled with earth  
But his words were not wasted

It was more to him than a demographic swing  
The barbarous thrust more than an ethnic threat  
Covered with classroom notes his verbs  
Are bloodstained faces.

Four hosts led by the Destroyer attacked from the east.  
The warm kingdoms summoned their men, the training feast  
Was forgone. Out of the silence burst the voice of the Blusterer



"Send your hostages forward  
Send them dressed in the garments of peace  
Call me Overlord call me master  
And from this day our conflict shall cease . .

Unreproducible blunt repetitive rhymes  
Like the breath in his lungs  
Made short and immediate by danger  
The last moment the culmination of times  
Of postponement. 'The cold future hangs  
In the air while the nation waits for the leaders' answer.

Owain son of Urien in the vanguard  
Made the first reply. So proud of his descent  
His voice was the first blow. "There are no hostages  
There will be none. Today or any day."  
Then his father spoke, Urien, Taliesin's master,  
The great lord of the lakes, the leader of the host:

"They wish to meet us! 'They have proposals to discuss!  
Make a fence of linked shields! Let us  
Show them our faces over a rim of steel! Let them  
See spears level above our heads! Let us  
Fall upon them and pick out his head  
From their ranks as they tumble  
In heaps before us."

And there he pauses.  
No account of the battle is given  
Only the scene at nightfall

Before Llwyfain wood  
Between the hills the site forgotten and the country lost  
The corpses have stopped bleeding  
But the gorged crows are daubed with blood.

What does *armaf* mean?  
*Armaf arfaethu, paratoi cân?*  
. . . *virumque cano* . . . Push the letters about  
Split the syntax, change the language

The voice of the poet fits  
His cattle on the narrow bridge  
Defy the passage of time

As the little scholar said  
Old deaths are the latest

Take a year take a lifetime  
To hammer out this song.

Bruno Bettelheim

# Obsolete Youth

## *Towards a Psychograph of Adolescent Rebellion*

"CALL ME ISHMAEL," is how Moby Dick begins. So we know at once that Ishmael is not the hero's true name; that his true name has no meaning because he has no true identity; and the stage is set for a novel about the struggle to gain an identity. But "Ishmael" told the reader much more at a time when everyone was familiar with the Bible. For the Bible says of Ishmael that "his hand will be against every man and every man's hand against him." He is the outsider *par excellence*, and this is how Melville describes his state of mind:

Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me,

that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street and methodically knocking people's hats off—then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can. This is my substitute for pistol and ball.

This, more than a hundred years ago, is how Melville saw the adolescent in crisis—saw the inner pressure to turn either toward senseless violence or to self-destruction. The only means he saw of avoiding one or the other was to change the environment *in toto*—to "escape the establishment," as we now say. For Melville, the path to solutions was not to drop out or to attack—though the pressure to do one or the other was intense, then as now. His way was to temporarily leave the establishment and, in desperate struggle with the elements and moral issues, to test his ability to be a man. In his day this was still possible on many frontiers: one could go West, go to sea, even go native in the tropics. In any case, the goal was not to break up the established order, but to return to it from one's wanderings, find one's rightful place in society, and there improve it by virtue of the manhood one had gained.

These, then, are the great differences between Melville's time and our own. What has changed is neither the adolescent turmoil nor the social and psychological pressures that make for it, but the ways of resolving it and the ultimate goals. These differences also constitute our problem today. For example, although history does not repeat itself (and America today is vastly different from pre-Hitler Germany) there are some striking similarities between the present student rebellion and what happened in the German universities to spearhead the rise of Hitler. Then, as now, we see the same lumping together of all facets and institutions of society into one defamatory image. This is meant to symbolise a reality so monolithic that it becomes out of the

DR. BRUNO BETTELHEIM is one of America's best-known psychologists. He is professor of psychology and psychiatry at the University of Chicago and head of the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School there. He is Austrian-born (1903) and gained his first experience with psycho-analysis in Vienna. He fled Europe in 1939 after a year in the concentration camps of Dachau and Buchenwald; it was on these experiences that he based one of his most famous studies, "Individual and Mass Behaviour in Extreme Situations." Among his books are two scientific studies on the treatment and rehabilitation of emotionally disturbed children, "Love is Not Enough" (1950) and "Truants from Life" (1955). A more general work of social analysis was published in 1960 (Thames & Hudson, London and Free Press, New York) under the title, "The Informed Heart: Autonomy in a Mass Age." His latest book is *Children of the Dream*, published by Macmillan (New York) and, later this year, by Thames & Hudson (London).

question to improve one or another part of it at a time. No need, then, for any reasonable assessment of differing merits for all the many and so different features of "the establishment"—or, in Nazi terminology, "*das System*." Having decided *a priori* that no improvement is possible, it follows that the only thing left is to bring down the whole system. With society so rotten, it can neither reform itself nor be reformed, but can only be born again through violent revolution. Goering's "When somebody mentions culture [or appeals to reason] I reach for my revolver" reappears today in the Black Panther slogan, "1968—THE YEAR OF THE PIG, THE DEATH OF THE BALLOT, THE BIRTH OF THE BULLET." And Tom Hayden gives it symbolic expression when he ends an impassioned appeal for revolution by going off stage to return brandishing a rifle.

THIS FASCINATION WITH VIOLENCE, the intoxication with repetitious exaggerations which are taken to demonstrate the validity of assertions, have their counterpart in the familiar anti-intellectual stance. One hammers home a simplistic reduction of complex issues, unwilling to consider reasonable arguments because those are only efforts to confuse the cause and divert the movement. The reliance is on inspiration because "gut" reactions, according to which the cause "feels" right, will prove its correctness. Since everything is based on felt, rather than thought-out convictions, there is no programme for what is to be done once the revolution succeeds. In short, these are "true believers." Just so were the German students before them convinced that theirs was the only moral position. Their moral absolutism gives them the right to destroy what they judge to be amoral—the right to break up and take over meetings, shout down or physically assault those not in full agreement with them. Indeed such militance is not only felt to be right, but an obligation.

In pre-Hitler Germany, of course, student rebels came from the extreme Right while now they are of the extreme Left. Then the new philosophy that won a mass following for the faithful was racist, was directed against a discriminated minority (the Jews), while now the avowed intention of radical students is to help a discriminated minority. Though this is an important difference, it does not change the essential parallel that, in each case, universities were coerced into procedures mapped out by the true believers—even to making appointments, in each case, on the basis of racial origin. To use only one example, German universities began to cave in when students

coerced faculties to appoint professorships in *Rassenwissenschaft* (courses on the special history, merits, and achievements of one race apart from all others) instead of focusing all teaching on contributions to knowledge, whatever the origin of the scholar.

I stress the parallels because they seem to me to be characteristic of the violent, anti-intellectual youth movements of our age. Still, the social and economic realities of pre-Hitler Germany and of America and Western Europe today are so vastly different that one may hopefully expect a far different outcome.

WHAT SOCIAL or psychological changes, what present-day constellations can explain the different ways of Melville's time and our present adolescent revolt?

About the climate of student revolt, I can offer no deeper insight than Melville's description of Ishmael's state of mind. All too many of our late adolescents are choosing "pistol and ball" as an answer: that is to say, with no frontiers left for flight or for conquest some try to evade and escape an inner conflict they find unbearable by dropping out—today more and more often through the slow suicide of *LSD* or *Speed*. Such persons, even if they escape killing themselves, destroy their autonomous selves through a delusional life of non-existence. Others "step out into the street" in Melville's phrase, as if he had foreseen the adolescent itch to confront for the sake of confrontation. They are convinced that they are struggling actively for personal autonomy, but they are in fact destroying it as radically as those others who withdraw into solipsistic isolation.

Nevertheless today, just as in pre-Hitler days, rebellious students are pictured as the brave new generation, disgusted with the complacency of their parents, battling courageously for a better world. In what were then the mass media, they were seen as "idealists," young persons concerned with the real issues of society—the "wave of the future," as they came to be known. But in 1968 Left student activists burned books they disliked in the same manner and place (Berlin) that Hitler's youthful followers burnt them in 1933.

If I read the signs of our own times correctly, I do not think our student rebels, in and by themselves, are a serious political danger—though I deem them a real threat to the universities and the intellectual life of our society.

What I fear is rather the opposite: that the pro-

vocative behaviour of a very small group of students will arouse a dangerous counter-reaction. Their Fascism of the Left (particularly when, as in the U.S.A., it is combined with a black fascism such as that of the "Panthers" whom they have been trying to annex) may bring on a Right backlash which could indeed strangle the democratic order. This is what I hold to be most menacing about the student attempts to create chaos: the democratic process could prove to be quite ineffectual in containing them. Clearly such demonstrations undermine trust in the democratic way and lead their opponents toward extreme solutions of their own. If this happens it could indeed swell the ranks of the still insignificant fascists of the right, give them a mass following that would constitute a very real danger. In desperation, and in order to prevent chaos, repressive measures might then be taken that would seriously threaten democratic institutions. The tactics of the New Left radicals, designed as they are to test and exhaust the patience of what they call the Establishment (or the System, or the Structure), do create desperation, particularly since the student movement has no comprehensive positive programme of its own and since revolution without a definite picture of what the future would be like when the revolution is over, can only contribute to the creation of well-founded anxiety. It is because of this danger that I believe we must deal with student rebellions. How else to do this constructively than by dealing with the deep-seated causes of widespread unrest among academic youth?

<sup>1</sup> As I write, I note that the presidents of three American universities (Michigan, Brandeis, San Francisco State) agreed that if the war in Viet Nam were to end tomorrow, it would do little or nothing to end student revolt ("The College Turmoil," *CBS News Special*, 15 April).

<sup>2</sup> In this speech (which was widely reprinted all over the U.S.) Professor Wald quoted a U.S. Senator who remarked on the floor of the Senate that if it came to nuclear war he would prefer that the survivors be Americans. Many (including me) would take exception to such a statement. But Professor Wald called it "criminally insane," and said he called it that speaking as a "Nobel Laureate" (in biology), a reliance on titular authority he would normally shun when not speaking as a "true believer." Since a criminally insane person should be locked up, Wald's remark suggests that the Senator be denied free speech. It is examples like this—where illustrious faculty members would deny freedom of speech to those they disagree with on grounds of their own higher truth—that disruptive students emulate when they deny the right to speak to those with whom they disagree.

## The Age-groups of Anxiety

IN ORDER to understand the discontent, one has to begin by asking: "What do the dissenting youth, all round the globe, have in common?" In the U.S., students point first to Viet Nam and the Negro problem. Because of the first, they say, we have "no future" and no possibility of a "relevant" education; since society has failed to solve the problem of war and peace, it should be "destroyed." Even if some do not go quite so far, they distrust a society which (they say) does nothing to end violence, racial injustice, urban decay, air and water pollution, etc. But in Germany there is no Negro problem; in Japan there is no Viet Nam; in Italy and France no one threatens to make nuclear war. What, then, is common to so wide a cross-section of world youth? One thing they do share is that all are "against the Americans"—presumably because of the magnitude of their military establishment, and especially the Bomb. But Soviet Russia has an even larger standing army, relies just as much on atomic weapons, not only represses small nations but grants her own population, including her young people, considerably less freedom. Why, then, the concerted anger against the U.S.?

I believe there are sound psychological reasons for this, and for the indifference to suppression by the even larger, more powerful, military-industrial complex that rules all of Soviet life. I am convinced that Viet Nam and the Bomb serve youth as a screen for what really ails them. I refer to their feeling that "youth has no future" because modern technology has made them *obsolete*—that they have become socially irrelevant and, as persons, insignificant.<sup>1</sup> Not because their future is bleak with the prospect of a nuclear holocaust (as Professor George Wald told MIT students recently and for which they gave him a standing ovation) but because of their feeling that nobody needs them, that society can do nicely without them.<sup>2</sup> This is the even bleaker anxiety behind their feeling that "youth has no future." Because if a young man does not feel it is he who will be building the future, and is genuinely needed to bring it about, then the feeling is that he has none. That is why, in hopes of denying such an anxious conviction, they insist that their mission is to build a "wholly new and different" future. Their anxiety is not (as they claim) about an impending atomic war. It is not that society has no future. Their existential anxiety is that *they* have no future in a society that does not need them to go on existing.

It is modern technology—with its automation

and computerisation—that seems to make man and his work obsolete, seems to rob him of his personal importance in the scheme of things. Since America's technology is the most advanced, it is the Americans who become the main target, whatever they do, or do not do. This may also explain the lack of ire against Soviet Russia's imperialism and atomic weaponry. Young Russians are still very much needed. They may lack freedom of expression and thought, but there is no question in their minds that their society needs them for its future. Deep down, what youth is fighting against is not so much the war in Viet Nam or the global balance, but an America whose technology seems to have robbed them of any place in the real work of the world.

It makes sense, then, that so much of their battle is fought in and around schools. (In the U.S.A.: the grammar and high schools where Negroes are concerned, or the colleges and universities where both whites and blacks are concerned. Actually, I believe, the problems of black students are entirely different from those of white students, but this is a subject for another discussion.) For it is education that prepares us for our place in the work of society. And if education today prepares us only to be replaceable items in the production machine, or to be programme assistants in its computer systems, then it seems to prepare us not for a chance to emerge in importance as persons, but only to serve the machine better. The battle against the "War Machine" serves more readily than most to disguise how much the battle is really a hatred of machines altogether for seeming to dominate the whole of life. Essentially—as for the 19th-century Luddite—the machinery, and what it appears to do to human beings, is the true enemy. And since youth does not trust the human intellect to find ways out of the impasse to which modern technology has brought us, they become anti-intellectual. Even the outcry against research, and in favour of teaching, bespeaks their conviction that intellectual labours are not the answer. Instead, they pin their hopes on the personal relation. It gives them, temporarily, the feeling that for at least as long as the personal interaction lasts, they are important to someone.

BEHIND THIS LIE EVEN MORE fundamental reasons why adolescent malaise grows so widespread. These begin to emerge, in my view, when we look in quite another direction: when we recognise that adolescent revolt is not a stage of

development that follows automatically from our natural make-up. What makes for adolescent revolt is the fact that a society keeps the next generation too long in a state of dependence; too long, in terms of mature responsibility and a striving for independence, of a sense of place that one has personally striven for and won. This, I believe, is the common denominator of the various new movements of student power and youthful revolution. And that they occur only where affluence exists, only in the modern industrial state, is merely this common denominator as seen from the outside.

Years ago when schooling ended for the vast majority at 14 or 15 (and thereafter one became self-supporting, got married, had children) there was no need for adolescent revolt. Puberty is a biological fact, but adolescence as we know it, with its special identity crises, is not. All children grow up and become pubertal. They do not all become adolescents. To be adolescent means that one has reached (and even passed) the age of puberty, is at the very height of one's physical development—healthier, stronger, even handsomer than one has been, or will be, for the rest of one's life—but must nevertheless postpone full adulthood till long beyond what any other period in history has ever considered reasonable.

Unlike Melville's time, there are no more open frontiers. With such escape routes now closed, our society has no special place for adolescence—with the single exception of our colleges and universities. To compound matters, nowadays we push our young people towards maturity even while over-extending the years of their dependence. We start them sooner and sooner in school and make a farce of "graduations" (even from kindergarten now!) until school becomes a rat race with never a home stretch in sight. And so, by the time they get to college, they've "had it." I, for my part, doubt whether life was ever less of a rat race than today. But it only became a *senseless* rat race when more and more people came to feel that they were racing after goals that were not really worthwhile or urgent, since survival seemed so assured by the affluent state.

At the same time, only a small minority of youth emerges well prepared from the educational experience today (whether in the home or the school) for such a prolonged waiting, for controlling their angry impatience. Here we should not overlook the symbolic meaning of

the student invasions of the office of the President or Dean. Big in size and age, those who sit-in feel like little boys with a need to "play big" by sitting in papa's big chair. They want to sit in the driver's seat, and they want to have a say in how things are run, not because they feel competent to do so, but because they cannot bear to feel incompetent a single moment longer.

### *The Desperate Search*

I THINK IT IS unnatural to keep a young person in dependence for some 20 years of school attendance. This may be a bearable way of life for that small élite which would always have chosen it in the past. There were always those who could go to school for 20 years, but they were never more than a small percentage of the population—even of the university population which included those attending as a matter of caste. The tremendous push now on everyone to "go to university" has brought incredibly large numbers to the academic life who do *not* find their self-realisation through study or the intellectual adventure—or not at that point in their lives. What they still want urgently, however, is to find their manhood.

To make matters worse, our institutions of higher learning have expanded too fast. Under public pressure for more education for all, they have steadily increased enrolment without the means to make parallel adjustments in the learning situation. One result is far too large classes; another is the anonymity, the impersonal nature of student-faculty contacts against which students rightly complain. Too many classes in our large universities are taught by teaching assistants (some of whom share the same dilemma as the students, and hence tend to side with the rebellion). So, once again, the students feel cheated.

Professor Allan Silver of Columbia University has put his finger on what to me seems the real problem when he says, "Their attack on the university—whether as surrogate for society's

sins, or for its own peculiar failings—has something to do with the desperate search for a livable home in America. . . ."<sup>3</sup> Most of all (one is tempted to add) they search for a home in which one is finally the master in his own house. Such students want, essentially, those group therapeutic experiences which will help them feel they have at long last come of age. But colleges are simply not mass therapeutic institutions, and hence they must inevitably disappoint the students where their greatest need lies.

It is, thus, the waiting for things—waiting for the real life to come—that creates a climate in which a sizeable segment of students are chronically seduced into following the militant lead of a small group of zealots. In the words of Jerry Rubin, the Yippie organiser:

Who the hell wants to "make it" in America any more? The American economy no longer needs young whites and blacks. We are waste material. We fulfil our destiny in life by rejecting a system which rejects us.<sup>4</sup>

Campus rebellion seems to offer youth a chance to short-cut the time of empty waiting and to prove themselves real adults. This can be seen from the fact that most rebellious students, on both sides of the Atlantic, are either undergraduates, or those studying the social sciences and humanities. There are precious few militants among students of medicine, chemistry, engineering, the natural sciences. To dismiss this as self-selection would be oversimplifying. It is true that those who come to the university and who are already deeply dissatisfied with themselves and society, tend to study psychology, political science, philosophy, sociology. Such students even choose psychology in the hope that to study it will add to self-knowledge (which it can) and will solve their psychological problems (which it cannot). Feeling lost in themselves, they also feel lost with others and come to think that by studying society, they will feel more at home in the world, and hence with themselves. But when the study of these and related subjects fails to solve their inner difficulties, or the various problems they have in relating to others, they come to hate the university whose teaching disappoints them. They are convinced that the teaching is "irrelevant"—as indeed it is when it comes to solving deep-seated emotional problems of long standing, because it was never designed to that end.

<sup>3</sup> Allan Silver, "Who Cares for Columbia?", *The N.Y. Review of Books* (30 January 1969).

<sup>4</sup> Jerry Rubin, "An Emergency Letter to My Brothers and Sisters in the Movement," in *The N.Y. Review of Books* (13 Feb. 1969). Rubin was Project Director for the March on the Pentagon in October 1967, and an organiser of Yippie activists at the 1968 Chicago Democratic Convention.

ANOTHER AND EVEN MORE widespread disenchantment derives from what I have discussed earlier: the need of late adolescents to feel that their labours make a difference in the world, and the depressing conviction that they do not. For it is hard to see how the average social science student or the student of humanities can get a sense of importance from his studies until such time as he is deeply immersed in them: and this takes effort and concentration. Even then, the feeling may be somewhat esoteric. But what swifter and surer way to feel active than to become an activist? On the other hand, as Michael Beloff has pointed out, "Student power has no meaning in the laboratory; no one doubts the need for leadership by the more experienced of the less experienced...."<sup>5</sup> While one can easily convince oneself that one knows precisely what's wrong with society, particularly if one's friends all agree, it is impossible to fool oneself that one knows what went wrong in the cancerous cell—or of how easy it would be to "create a new system" in the sciences. One has to try to test one's conviction about shortcomings in science through experiment; and if poorly thought-out experiments fail, one must study to see why they failed. It may seem easy to believe one can create "a better world" without working things out in detail, but it is impossible to claim solution for a problem in chemistry without the experiment to prove it, and this takes real work.

The medical student who is confronted with cancerous tissue cannot believe what he is doing, or the discipline it demands, is "irrelevant." Which may explain the large number of clinical-psychology students (those studying emotional disturbance in the vain hope that this will cure their own) among campus dissenters, and the near total absence among them of students of experimental or physiological psychology.

Those who cannot find themselves in their studies or their work are hence the most vocal in finding the university irrelevant. Typically, the militant finds his largest following among the newcomers, those with least time or chance as yet to find a place for themselves at the university. Some try to find this place instantly, by plunging into active, even violent battle against the existing order. Yet, if they should win they would be changing the university

into an institution that no longer serves inquiry and study, into a belligerent political workshop for the reshaping of society. And it is exactly that which the militant personality wants to be "part of"—not inquiry and study, but *la lutte finale*.

This is not to say that political change is not needed. It is merely to insist that the campus is not the pertinent arena, for the purpose of the academic inquiry is to search for proper avenues of reform, not to drop the inquiry in order to carry the gun.

### *Freudian Ambiguities*

I SHOULD like to speak briefly of the small group of leaders of the radical Left, whom I have come in recent years, for one reason or another, to know well. In most cases, it has seemed to me, their intellect was developed at much too early an age, and at the expense of their emotional development. Although exceedingly bright, some remained emotionally fixated at the age of the temper tantrum. It is this discrepancy between great intellectual maturity and vast emotional immaturity which is so baffling—often even to the professors and university administrators who fail to see, behind the obvious intelligence, the inability to brook delay or to think rationally or to act responsibly. This blind spot is an occupational hazard of the academic mind. Committed as academicians to the intellect as the highest of values, they are so captivated by the intelligence of student rebels that they are ready to excuse, or overlook, the cult of open contempt for reason-based action.

One other personal impression. Practically all those who have investigated the phenomena of student revolts and the related upsurge of beatniks and hippies) have been struck by the dominance among the leadership of the children of enlightened, upper-middle-class parents. Nothing is so illuminating as to listen to what these students tell us, when they are asked why they feel the establishment has to be "smashed" down, why they feel this society, of which they are such obviously privileged members, is not worth being preserved or improved. As one Harvard senior has reported:

Time after time SDS members respond to questions about their views on the sickness of society with, "Well, take my father for example...."

<sup>5</sup> Michael Beloff, "October for the Rebels," *ENCOUNTER* (October 1968).

Just as often, in my own experience, I received the answer, "Take my parents for example. . . ." And it is indeed in the new ways of rearing children in the upper-middle-class home that we have to look for some additional answers.

What is wrong? Firstly, because of the ways we have brought them up as infants and children, we send so many youngsters into adolescence very ill-prepared for the kind of identity crisis I have just described—the one caused by a prolonging of adolescence beyond all reasonable limits.

Second is the fact that so many of us adults do not want to recognise the adolescent's experiment with extremes as being exactly that. Many among the intelligentsia are well aware that, for sound or understandable psychological reasons, adolescents may have to experiment in their own mind with extreme and non-viable solutions. But too many, who should know better, are suddenly calling them potentially viable solutions—ones that should, therefore, get serious consideration. Thus, when we adults fail to take a stand from which adolescents can sort out for themselves which ideas are suitable for experiment in thought only, youth is left without any clear directions. They come to believe that whatever can be experimented with in thought is also suitable to be tried in reality.

Much of this comes of a misapplication of psycho-analytic insights and procedures. This can be illustrated by the question of violence and the learning of controls. Psycho-analysis has certainly suggested that we should not suppress our inner rages but should face them. But we were only expected to face them in thought, and only in the safely structured treatment-situation. This has been misapplied by large numbers of the educated middle classes to mean that aggression should always be expressed, and not just in thought. Accordingly, many children today do not learn to repress aggression enough: to express it in thought, and not in violence. They do not internalise superego controls over their rages. Consequently, when adolescent pressures flood them with aggression, they have no built-in ways to control it or restrict it to thought only. What Freud taught us about the crippling effects of an over-repression of emotions—because that was where the shoe pinched in *his* day—has been wrongly extended to mean it is all right to discharge emotions in action, including rage, without control of the discharge by fear or by rational reflection.

I speak of "fear" because of a related misunderstanding of Freud: the vague feeling among parents and educators that children should never be made to feel frightened at breaking a moral command. Not only are our children ill-prepared to brook delay, they have also been confronted with a morality whose basic motivation we have done our best to remove. We want to remove fear from the life of the child, but we want him to curb his own tendencies towards violence as if we had not. Yet for children, the earliest controls of violence rest on fear and are largely irrational; they come from the moral commands of adults. On the basis of fear, not of rational judgment, the child is told what he "must do" and "must not do." Only later does the mature ego apply reason to these *do's* and *don'ts* and then slowly subject them to critical judgment. Only as maturity grows can we slowly free ourselves of fear and begin to question its absolute tenets.

What was wrong, then, with old-fashioned, authoritarian education was not that it rested on fear. On the contrary, that is what was right with it. What was wrong was that it disregarded the need to modify the fear in a continuous process so that irrational anxiety would steadily give way to more rational motivation. Today many parents are no longer willing to take displeasure from their children by imposing controls. But neither are they willing to invite the child to join in the troublesome search for alternatives whenever frustration occurs. To such parents, modern psychology seems a way out.

BECAUSE FREUD showed them the evil effects of too much fear, of too much Victorian repression—because he concentrated on what most plagued the middle classes *then*—our own middle classes (to paraphrase Schiller) learned carefully how their master coughed and spit in order to totally disregard what he taught. Freud certainly knew that without strong inner controls (preferably conscious ones) man would sink back into barbarism. If he stressed it less, it was because the dominant pathology in his day came of too much, not too little, control. But with both teachings available, many middle-class families chose to follow Freud where it suited their convenience, and were as demanding of conformity as the worst Victorian parent where it did not. In either case, they evaded their adult responsibility. Whereas the old way



of repression was at least all of a piece, the modern way is one of contradictions. Some instinctual tendencies are still repressed as before, while others are directed towards discharge without intervening thought and rational control. This makes no sense at all, and it is a major source of the youthful cry that our society *seems* senseless. Even worse, the decisions as to what to repress and what to discharge are based not on the interests of the child, but the convenience of adults. This, in my view, is where the fatal error lies and it constitutes what most outrages youth. That is, instinctual pleasure was not given so the child could begin life by enjoying his own body and, hence, the world, but as a bribe held out so the child would become more proficient at making his parents feel good about themselves. Sufficient reason then, for such youngsters to make a farce of permissiveness by asking for everything, with no sense of obligation to give in return. When I see some of these students—"way out," or "unwashed and unkempt"—though, of course, nothing I say here is true for all of them—I cannot help thinking: "There goes another youngster who, as an infant, was practically scrubbed out of existence by his parents in the name of good hygiene and loving care. . . ."

Any look at their manner of dress or hair-do should demonstrate how they revolt against parents who told them they could dress as they liked, provided they came out looking exactly as pleased the parents' pride, and not the child's convenience. Yet, in a strange contradiction—and I talk of the inner contradictions that tear the Extremist apart and mark all his outer behaviour, his hatred of self and society, and of all adults over 30—he only seems to reverse, or to compensate for, what his parents did to him. He seems, on the surface, to be doing "the opposite"; he believes that in his manner of dress he is defying his parents; yet, deep down, he is still copying their behaviour. He mistreats the legitimate needs of his body just as much as his parents did, only this time not by scrubbing, but by neglect. Having been pushed out of infancy and childhood towards higher maturity in one area, and indulged or overstimulated in others, he finds himself in a crisis that can only tear him to pieces.

As these children strive for independence from their parents, how natural it is that some "drop out" while others furiously resent the professors (those parental figures, once removed).

That the academic faculty is resented for some of the reasons I have mentioned, may be inferred from the angry charges of students that "professors care more for their research than for teaching," as if the search for and transmission of knowledge were not all of a piece. True, a lot of pedantic research goes on at universities (though a lot of pedants also teach who have never done a stitch of research). But, in general, I have found those who combine teaching with a meaningful search for knowledge the more inspiring teachers.

THE CONTRADICTORY REARING I speak of would still be manageable (as parental contradictions always were) if, as the youngster approached adulthood, he could begin at last to arrange for what to him was a meaningful life of his own.<sup>4</sup> Failing that, all he can do to reassert his independence is to reverse parental standards in his style of living, of dress, of sexual behaviour. And this is where he collides head-on with the final contradiction that, in my opinion, provokes student revolt. Because deep down he knows these are empty postures, that it is only making a show of self-determination when to be sustained by his parents (or the taxpayers) at college disproves it. All of his life, up to now, he has been told that he must learn to be a self-directing person. Now at last, when the pressures are overwhelming to do and to be just that, he is told to go on being dependent, beholden to the grown-ups for his livelihood, to follow directions, to study hard, and to submit to examinations where others will decide whether and what he has achieved.

The "scene" where this happens for millions of students is the university, and it is the university he lashes out at—though the university can neither end a war, dismantle a military-industrial complex, or achieve for him the personal independence he craves. Since he does not know (or does not dare to know) what his deepest longing and deepest rages are, he does not take them where they belong. He does not burn down his parents' home, or even the Capitol. What he threatens to burn down is the university. It is the university, he believes, that is keeping him from manhood.

Psychologically I found most student extremists hating themselves as intensely as they hate the establishment—a self-hatred they try to escape from by fighting *any* establishment. Here, again, this is not to say an established social order is not always due, and sometimes

overdue, for reform. But I maintain that despite the high-sounding moral charges against its sins, those sins (in the hearts and minds of youth) are not "the destruction of youth in Viet Nam" but the neglect of youth on the home front: they think they have been classified as "waste material," and they feel compelled to "reject a system that rejects us."

### Paranoia & Politics

I HAVE worked professionally with some militant leaders for years, and I know that student revolt permits the social isolate to believe temporarily that he is "part of a community," and offers an opportunity for the paranoid person to act out his paranoia as could happen in no other niche of society. I have found it all too understandable that so many extreme isolates and paranoids have quickly flocked to the ranks of Extremism. Unfortunately, most non-professionals do not know how persuasive paranoids can be in their unconscious appeal to the vague and fleeting paranoia of the immature and disgruntled. Paranoids are always persuasive in their appeal to any group of the population who rightly or wrongly feel persecuted. They seek out such groups as most likely to take their paranoia for a true understanding of the particular dilemma of a group's grievances.

Political activity for such persons enables them to escape a complete break with reality. They may interpret reality in line with their delusions, but at least they remain in touch with isolated aspects of reality, and the support and admiration of their followers is another, though most tenuous, contact.

I know one student activist who took part in every demonstration he could, because while they lasted they gave him a temporary feeling of being "close to others." For the same reason he pressed for as many (and as drawn-out) demonstrations and sit-ins as he could. Or, as Professor Silver has described the climate inside the four occupied buildings at Columbia University in the spring of 1968:

An intense communal life emerged, in which students at last enjoyed [a] shared commitment and purpose. . . . This enjoyment became one of the chief purposes of the uprising, something that could not easily be bargained or negotiated away.

But then one day, the student I have referred to was on one of his marches, and the instruc-

tion was given that each one should hold someone's hand. It so happened that he found himself without anyone holding on to his. It was after this experience that he also began to take drugs to escape his personal misery, until eventually he entered psychiatric treatment. Much later, recalling the incident in therapy, he still remembered with tears: "No one held mine. . . ."

TO EMBRACE THE EXTREME POSITION, then, can actually be an ego defensive action. It succeeds because the discharge of rage and violence drains off the aggression that would otherwise destroy whatever paranoid defences remained working. Typical of such persons is the quasi- or openly delusional quality of their beliefs, their inaccessibility to reason while loudly complaining that nobody listens to them, the oversimplification of issues, and the preoccupation with violence and destruction (the imagined destruction of themselves, and the readiness to consider the destruction of their enemies). All of this is combined with an absence of, or emotional paucity and flatness in their personal relations.

For them, an essential purpose of revolt is not to reach a limited or tangible goal, such as an acceptance of some or even all of their demands, but to escape their devastating isolation, or to prove themselves strong, or both. Since the weakness is their own, no achievement of goals will ever satisfy, and that is why negotiated solutions are rejected and the ends always escalate. Such goals as are achieved merely add to frustration. Success merely threatens to make them realise that the goal reached has not in any way relieved the inner sense of isolation or weakness, of being oppressed, and it ends the fleeting relief they enjoyed in the struggle.

The Germans called their own rebellious adolescents the *Halbstarken* or the half-strong. In German, the connotation is that they feel their weakness but wish to deny it through a show of great strength. Only it does not "come off," because all their efforts (to continue in American slang) are only "half-assed": which, in *The Dictionary of American Slang*, means: "Ignorant of a specific field of endeavour or pertinent facts; without full or proper plans, experience, knowledge or understanding. . . ."

But even if some of these rebellious students are paranoid, and others desperate isolates, both pathologies have existed in all societies, and can hardly explain our problem. Certainly it does

not account for the seriousness or the magnitude of the present student revolt. For our real concern is not so much with the activist leaders as with their followers: that larger and ever-changing body of students whom the leaders can attract and enlist once they have set up the Confrontation that pits the world of the fathers against the world of the sons.

JUST AN ADDITIONAL WORD, however, about the small group of the militant leaders. I find their psychological makeup very different indeed from that of those serious students who are deeply concerned with what is wrong in our universities and in society; who try for improved ways of doing things, but who know that violence only leads to destruction, and who respect themselves and others too much to manipulate them, to push them around or to prevent others from doing their own freely chosen work. The militant leaders have very different motives. Most of them I found to be consumed by a self-hatred from which they try to escape by fighting *any* establishment. Many of these extremists are highly intelligent and very verbal. Unfortunately their claim to act out of high motives, and their occasional on-target attack on real evils, has misled many well-meaning people into overlooking the true motif: this is hate, not desire for a better world. This is not to say that much in our world is not itself hateful; but only that hatred and the lust for destruction never lead to an improvement of life. Here we should not overlook how many—and for how long!—were taken in by Hitler's emphasis on "the suffering of the people" as a mainspring of his actions; a great many Germans (and not a few Europeans) hoped he would indeed create a new order, overlooking the fact that the real source of his passion for change was an overwhelming *ressentiment*.

It is their hatred of society that makes it so easy for the small group of militant leaders to make common cause with two other small groups that provide temporary leadership for some rebellions: those persons who suffer from extreme isolation, and those who are clearly paranoid. I do not believe the number of paranoids among students is greater than their number would be in any comparable group of the population. They become dangerous because their high intelligence makes them so successful at hiding their disturbance from the layman. Recently a former extremist tried to explain to me why he became so engaged.

"Instead of my true emptiness and hate, I could, in the Movement, claim that I loved Man. I could think I was constructive and not destructive. Because I had no real self, did not feel any understanding for the individual, I had to have group beliefs. When I was able to take my anger out on the System, screaming with others, 'Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids have you killed today?' it was both a release and a connection...."

After a few years of this existence he came to realise that "it was similar to fascism and that I had gotten involved with an evil, power hungry, manipulating, fascist-type Left.... Then I was healthy enough to get out...."

After such knowledge and partings of the ways, we should take very seriously what he now has to say:

"I had and still have no respect for our schools because they always thought I was so good and bright [all through school he had been an outstanding student] when I was so sick. The rebelliousness of the extremists is caused by this emotionally starved and contact denied infancy. I was attracted to Communism because they have communal nurseries, so that mothers cannot 'murder' their infants [as he felt his mother had done].... My leftist preoccupation was to change the world so that what had happened to me could not and would not happen to any other child." What he meant was, namely, his exploitation by his parents for their narcissistic needs which required that he should be an outstanding academic, that he concentrate on developing his intellect, at the expense of satisfying his most urgent inner needs. Like many others of the extreme militants who are often so bright, he was intellectually precocious but, emotionally, terribly immature.

I was also told this:

"One motivation in my politicalisation wasn't in the least political. After having sat inactive, internally and externally—in school and outside—most of my life, I could now picket, distribute leaflets, run off to Washington, work and talk with people all over the country, as if I had a connection to other people.... It was either doing that, or remaining what to me seemed an inept, selfish, bored, lifeless and friendless, in short, a lost child. I felt if I would stop fighting I would disappear, because my stake and claim to life would disappear with it. But in the Movement there was always something new to get involved in, and I couldn't let my involvement stop and be faced with myself...."

"We had teach-ins. And in protest against the Army Draft we had a sit-in and a sleep-in. We all slept together, in the president's office, on his rugs. There I met a new boy-friend. Later that week I and a few other members of SDS went

to confront the president in his office. I was aware of the fact that with me, and many others on the Left, if we were granted what we said we wanted, we would no longer be happy—for we could no longer protest. We would be useless, we would be nothing, we would have to face ourselves...."

MY THESIS is that more than anything else it is the seeming vacuum to which we graduate so many of our young in the modern industrial state, which so convinces them that ours is a society that cannot make sense. This is the ground on which they make common cause with the activist leader; though for the activist, the emotional world his parents fashioned for him made "no sense" from the very beginning. It is on this common evaluation of the present that the many temporarily join ranks against the existing order with the few who lead them. The difference is that for the extremist, the overpowering motive is to uproot not to reform. For within him is the utter despair that anything could ever be right for him, an outlook bred into him during a lonely and desperate childhood when too much was asked of him and too little was given.

That is why student followers begin to look at things differently once the present becomes more satisfying—thanks either to a satisfying sexual relation, a reasonably good marriage, gratifying work, or some other satisfaction. The leaders remain committed to upheaval. Their permanent commitment is again reflected in the lack of designs for a better world to come once the revolution is made. Their unhappy beginnings have been a prologue; the rest of their lives may turn out to be one long epilogue to the rage that overwhelmed them in childhood. They continue to feel helpless to build anything positive in the huge world outside them, the world of their parents. Just as the infant sees his elders as so forbidding that, while they are still around, he can do nothing to better his fate, so it is for these rebellious students who project their past on to present conditions. Until they can be rid of this "establishment" they feel they have no chance at all to live their own lives.

### *The Secret Excitement*

WE KNOW that each society can raise a new generation in its own way. For ex-

<sup>6</sup>Lewis S. Feuer, *Conflict of Generations* (Basic Books, New York, 1969).

ample, if a society does not taboo sex, children will grow up in relative sex freedom. But so far, historical experience has indicated that such a society does not create culture or civilisation, but remains a primitive society. Without a fair degree of sex repression, no latency period; without latency, no prolonged span of intellectual learning. And the same goes for reasonable (but not overwhelming) fear. Without some fear, no internalisation; with too much fear, overwhelming rage or despair. Moderate fear leads to the internalisation without which we cannot work for long-range goals, cannot control our instinctual tendencies towards violence or aggression. Too much fear leads to utter withdrawal, or else to violent and destructive enactments. That is why controls will not work when the pressures pushing against them are too heavy—as when youth arrives at coming-of-age and feels it has no place to go.

It may be objected here that psycho-analysis is not responsible for errors in modern child-rearing, any more than nuclear scientists who did not personally work on the Bomb were to blame when the knowledge they discovered was destructively used. But once that did happen, they became actively concerned, and their house organ, the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, stressed a more rational control of their discoveries. My charge, then, against my own profession is that in their formal or informal efforts to educate outside of the treatment room, too little thought is devoted to dangerous misapplications of their findings; nor is there any concerted action to spread awareness of the dangers.

In the case of rebellious youth, our profession bears a second burden of guilt, but this one it shares with the whole adult community of literate adults. We fail these youth if we do not act on our knowledge of what lies behind the grandiloquent way in which they give voice to their confusion and distress. We should know how to interpret their rejection of reason, their reliance on coercion, and ultimately on violence itself.

Professor Lewis Feuer, who has studied (and was himself deeply involved in) the student revolt at Berkeley, has correctly observed:

Because the driving energy of such a movement stems largely from unconscious sources, it has trouble defining what it wants. The ideological consciousness is founded on the emotional unconscious of a generational revolt.<sup>6</sup>

To which I would add that even more critical

for extremists is the unconscious revolt against how they were brought up by their families.

But to unravel unconscious sources is the task of adults. Despite the present turmoil, these inner causes of outward behaviour are not being exposed by us as fearlessly and vigorously as when Freud pulled the veil away from a set of high-sounding moral claims and exposed Victorian sexuality for the sham that it was. We do not, in regard to student excesses, confront with equal vigour the inner anxieties that power the high-sounding moral pronouncements—whether voiced by the leaders of dissent or their adult public supporters. We are so anxious to look progressive that we fail to analyse the unconscious causes for such behaviour, though that is the only way we can help them with their inner conflicts.

Beholden as we are to some of the virtues admittedly present among rebellious students—just as there was considerable virtue in Victorian respectability—we refrain on that account from exposing their vices. But to refrain here is as much a betrayal as to deny there is merit to such complaints as may be sound and just.

THERE ARE REASONS why it is mainly the children of Leftist parents who become hippies or student revolutionaries in American society. The emotional content of student revolt may always be the same, yet its political content depends largely on the belief of the parents. In many ways it is a desperate wish to do better than the parent, especially where the parent seemed

weak in his beliefs. This makes it just as desperate a wish for parental approval. But most of all it is a desperate wish that the parent should have been strong in the convictions that motivate his actions. This is why so many of our radical students embrace Maoism, why they chant "*Ho Ho Ho Chi Minh*" in their demonstrations (with the noise that other generations of students expended at football rallies). They chant of strong fathers with strong convictions who powerfully coerce their children to follow their commands. While consciously they demand freedom and participation, unconsciously their commitment to Mao, and leaders like him, suggests their desperate need for controls from the outside, since without them they cannot bring order to their own inner chaos.<sup>7</sup>

C. P. Snow's recent novel, *The Sleep of Reason*, deals with precisely this issue of adult abdication from the teaching of controls. Two young Lesbians (one a leader raised in the new freedom, the other a follower) abduct a small boy. First they torture him, "to teach him obedience," and then they kill him, "to see how it feels." What both girls felt was so missing in their lives they try to recapture through a sexual crime. Snow raises the problem of whether this is what comes of thinking we could raise our children in freedom. He asks: Have we, in our desire for instinctual and political emancipation, so put our reason to sleep that we have brought forth monsters? And a second and even deeper problem he broaches is the secret excitement provided for us by the violent and at times obscene behaviour of these, our children.

In my own experience at faculty meetings, and listening to intellectuals talking about the turbulent events, I have come to a sense of how much these movements feed on excitements secretly felt and hidden from oneself. There is abroad in society today a fascination with sex and violence, with drugs and insanity, that student militants exploit to the full. If students protest and do so in orderly fashion, they get little or no public attention. But if they shed all their clothes and walk around naked, this makes news across the nation, whatever the original cause or conflict may have been.

Universities in particular lend a prestige to the claims of revolutionary students they would otherwise never enjoy. For example, there were days when no more than some 20 or 30 students occupied the administration building of the University of Chicago; but they got their

<sup>7</sup> There is another reason why rebellious youth has put Castro, and particularly Che Guevara, in its pantheon of heroes. It is the romantic appeal of the man who leaves the city culture and goes out into the wilderness (as did Ishmael, and the early explorers and pioneers) which attracts them to both. It shows how little they have outgrown childhood identifications with archaic culture heroes, how little they have accepted the ego ideals of maturity in our time—those of the scientist or political leader who attempts to ameliorate an imperfect industrial society, not those who try to escape or destroy it. Both Cuban guerrillas represent an image of individual man living a primitive life outside of a hated society. It is again the pre-machine age that is being extolled. It is modern technology (they feel) that robs them of the chance to be strong, to be men. Like Che Guevara they choose a quixotic battlefield and certain defeat with the poor—to whom they romantically ascribe all the attributes of Rousseau's noble savage, although the poor want nothing more than to enjoy, at long last, all the material advantages which only a highly industrialised society can provide.

daily headlines and were featured prominently in the newscasts of radio and TV. If some 30 people had demonstrated anywhere else, such coverage would never have occurred. This the SDS knows, hence their concentration on the universities. The contrast between an institution devoted to the highest achievements of reason, and the obscene and violent happenings perpetrated there, makes it all the more fascinating. On this fascination, student militants try to build their success.

Professor Erwin Scheuch has called it the technique of *parasitical publicity*.<sup>8</sup> An idea in itself, he says, may be next to nothing, but it becomes news by interfering with something else which is considered, for one reason or another, to be of public importance. Thus, in themselves, a couple of hundred demonstrators somewhere in New York or Chicago would mean very little. But

if you march into a large lecture hall, take control of the podium, and broadcast your own ideas to people who came to hear something quite different, then you have made news. . . . This is where the function of political phraseology becomes operative.

If girls dress up as witches and put a curse on professors (as they did in Chicago), or undress in public and walk around naked (as they did on other campuses) but without reference to the "sickness of society," everyone might well get the impression that it was they, poor souls, who were sick. But if they

do so as a condemnation of the Viet Nam war . . . they have the support of many of the older liberals and enlightened radicals, who will inevitably consider it all to be very socially significant. If you are a teen-ager wrestling with the police and you say you are doing it because of the moral superiority of a future social order, you cannot fail to get the sympathetic attention of the editors of all . . . radio- and TV-stations, rather than psychiatrists and youth welfare workers. The ritualistic invocation of ideology is thus both an alibi and a defence.

### *Recapturing the Initiative*

**A**BSURD OR NOT, these rebellions can and do paralyse universities. Not only because classes are interrupted and buildings occupied,

not only because the faculty must devote all their energies to calming things down, but because all the time and effort that should go to more lasting achievements are diverted to forestalling the next confrontation.

In our universities today we see faculty members who strive to remain aloof from it all, while others try to anticipate even the most radical of student demands in order to avoid confrontations. Unfortunately, too little is done to activate more constructive attempts at reform or to mobilise alternative student groups. Yet what this age group needs and wants is to be active. Even if student representatives were to sit on all faculty committees, take part in all their ponderous deliberations, this is not the active life youth hankers for. Much as they now clamour for it, they would soon enough want "out." Instead of searching, however, for modes of bringing action to student life, university authorities seem to spend their time worrying about what the militants may do next or in anxious efforts to give them no offence. Worst of all, many are so intimidated that they cave in before the students have even begun to exert pressure. All this has been sapping the universities of their strength to the point of paralysis. This anxious avoidance of taking a firm stand gives militants—but also many non-committed students—the feeling that they have the faculty on the run. What spectacle could be more irresistibly attractive?

If the colleges and universities felt sure of their values, took a determined stand against coercive intimidation—while open to and inviting reasonable discussion of any and all relevant improvements—I believe student rebellions would cease to be a threat. And here, I believe, lies the true challenge to our universities—the opportunity to give a lead to intellectual life, and beyond that to society in general.

The liberal mind in America and elsewhere has made all too much of a fetish out of formal democratism. They are so afraid they may be thought to be "unpopulistic," that they have become helpless when faced by the threats of mob rule. True, no system of government is more vulnerable than a democratic framework of civil liberties. If it should ever lose its ability to right itself by adapting to emergencies without losing its democratic way, it will indeed perish: destroyed either by an authoritarianism of the Right or the Left, or by its own defensive recourse to repressions that would displace it just as decisively. The alternative to being

<sup>8</sup> E. K. Scheuch, "The Liberation from Right Reason," *ENCOUNTER*, April.

destroyed from without by revolution, or from within by suppression, is to win back the consensus that protects it without the need for repressive extremes. So far the universities have done a poor job of protecting themselves; they have been vacillating between repression and surrender.

But the day seems gone when we could rely on our institutions remaining unchallenged because those who had a voice in them were part of a once broad consensus, part of the only establishment that counted and ran things. From now on, all institutions will be questioned—through force and intimidation, if the challengers can get away with it—through superior reasoning, if we are strong enough to permit nothing less. The more we invite and take advantage of sound reasons for and against change, and the more firmly we protect ourselves from coercion, the better off everyone will be.

At this moment in history both seem equally needed. If proposed changes are bad they should be rejected, violence or no. If they are better than what exists, why should they have to be dragged into being under duress, and thus legitimise the effectiveness of violence? On both counts it would seem the better part of valour for universities to recapture the vital thing they have lost: the initiative for change.

I THINK IT SHOULD BE obvious by now what I believe some of these much-needed improvements might be. Firstly, all too many who now go to university have little interest, ability, or use for what now constitutes higher education. They would be better off with a high-level education in the professions and the services, closely linked to a work programme. This would give scope to their need to be active, while enjoying tangible achievement in the immediate present. Their complaint is that "nobody needs" them. Since they feel themselves to be parasites of society, they come to hate a world which gives them such a feeling. But nothing so balances the uncertain sense of being an apprentice as already to be actively serving in the profession one is beginning.

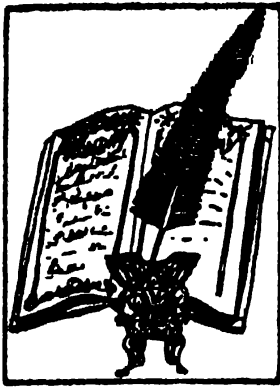
Here we should not be above learning from the communist countries where study is combined with work in the factory and field (particularly if we include the service occupations). I believe this to be a much better arrangement for those who feel no deep commitment to

study and research—and those who do will always be a relatively small part of this age group. I would even suggest a youth service programme of a few years' duration (something on the order of a civilian peace corps) in which young people could work on socially relevant projects while earning pay, and getting higher professional training as they do. After this period, only those would go to universities who really wanted to. By that time most of them would probably have acquired a real stake in society because they had been helping to shape it. At the very least, they would be better prepared for permanent jobs because of the training received.

So long as the need for an army draft in the U.S.A. continues, civilian service could be an alternative choice. Only those young Americans who preferred it would serve in the armed forces, making it a voluntary army. I am convinced that if every able-bodied person had to serve two years in one programme or the other, there would be no scarcity of those with a preference for two years of military service. This would further do away with the special draft exemption of U.S. college students which provokes so much unrest. Because if I am exempt from serving in Viet Nam when others are not, I can only live in peace with myself by believing it an amoral war. (As if there was ever a moral war!)

As for the extreme elements in the *groupuscules* who lead the student rebellion, I have little to add here. Without the current widespread discontent among youth, they would find scant enough following, which might force them to do something constructive for themselves. How could one assist in providing for them those emotional experiences which would help them out of their desperate isolation? For some, that could be provided most effectively by psychotherapy. If some others did seriously break the law they could, without followers, readily be contained. It is the mass support they arouse because of the general unrest among youth which alone makes them dangerous. I think it would be wrong to concentrate, in our thinking and planning for youth, in or out of college, on these very few. Our focus belongs on how to provide our young people with the real life experiences and the emotional satisfactions they need, for these are very different from those which their largely unconscious motives will go on pushing them towards for want of better direction.





# Column

THE UNIVERSITIES have come to occupy so central and vital a place in American life, which after all is a matter which for better or worse deeply affects us all,

that anything we can learn about them deserves our warmest gratitude. And indeed in the last few years we have not lacked for such material; student revolt has thrown the problems of the American universities into such sharp relief that they have become front-page news and hardly a day passes without some bizarre yet illuminating incident which is fully and faithfully recorded in the press.

Of course, to keep things in perspective, we should remember that our own universities also have their troubles. But so far at least they have been confined within fairly limited bounds, and no British university has yet been reduced to the condition of violence and disorder which has come to seem almost commonplace on American campuses; what are the troubles of Essex compared with those of Columbia or Berkeley?

I do not think we should feel too complacent about this. It is simply that even now, after the enormous expansion of recent years, the universities in Britain still do not have the crucial importance which they have assumed in the United States and so are far less directly exposed to all the tensions and pressures of society as a whole. When, if ever, they do, we may perhaps expect to see much the same kind of scenes enacted here; that is, of course, unless we are willing to learn by some of the lessons which are being so painfully imposed upon the American universities today.

One of these lessons, because all the charm and glamour of novelty, inventiveness, spontaneity, are on the side of students, is that there are two sides to student revolt; even a confrontation requires something to confront. Revolt in the universities would have lost at least its ostensible *raison d'être* without the existence of faculties, senates, councils, courts and all the other top-heavy administrative organs whose primary, or at least whose public function today seems to be to excite students to hysteria and obscenity.

Of these, of course, it is the faculty which is the most important. It is the members of faculty who, as a matter of daily routine, have to meet the assault of the students, their contempt, their jeers, their vituperation, their

physical violence, face to face. It is they who, while students stage sit-ins and freak-outs, occupy buildings, and threaten libraries with arson, huddle together in hastily called committees and try to solve the awful question presented to them by the students: *What then must we do?*

It is surprising therefore that, while by now thousands of pages have been devoted (not least by ENCOUNTER) to the cause of student revolt, to its psychology and sociology and philosophy (if one can use such a term), to its heroes, its battles, its strategy and tactics, very few people have thought it worth while to look at what is happening on the other side of the hill, at the reactions of those who are being attacked, or at the ideas and ideals with which they hope to counter the assault of the insurgent students. Sometimes indeed it almost seems as if they had totally vanished from the scene, having fled at the first sign of attack, and one hardly knows whether it is their own fault, or that of those who report the running fight on the campus, that the university authorities seem to invite the judgment: *les absents ont toujours tort*.

FROM TIME TO TIME, however, one comes across documents which at least help to illuminate the obscurity in which university teachers labour. One of them, I think, is the summer number of *Daedalus*, the journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. It is a bulky volume, of nearly 300 pages, and is devoted entirely to the subject of *The Future of the Humanities*. In addition to twenty papers contributed by those who took part in the conference, it also contains a *procès verbale* of the discussions which they provoked. Considered as a whole, the volume might well be taken, and, one supposes, is meant to be taken, as a survey of what some of the most distinguished teachers of the humanities in America think of the present and future condition of their subject.

I cannot help feeling, after studying this volume with a certain horrified fascination, that its title is to a large extent misleading. Its eminent contributors are less concerned with the actual state of learning in the subjects which they profess and the future to which this may be expected to lead than with the question: What is going to happen to us *if students go on behaving, feeling, and thinking as they do now?* Of course, they don't mean: what is going to happen to us individually. They mean: what is going to happen to the particular branches of learning which we profess, and how are we to go on honourably professing them, if we are at the same time to meet the demands which our students are currently, and in some cases violently, pressing upon us?



To me at least this is a somewhat dismaying approach to the subject which the conference had under discussion. The humanities, which here may be taken roughly to mean the study of men's creative activities from the most distant to the most immediate past, have been of such immense delight and benefit to mankind that it seems almost insulting to suppose that their future development should be at the mercy of what one, perhaps transient and ephemeral, generation of students thinks of them. Or rather, not of what they think of the humanities, for of these they are very largely ignorant, even when they are their chosen subject of study. What matters to the students is what they think of themselves, of their position in society and of their demands upon it and their rejection of it because their demands are not satisfied. The humanities have a claim on their respect, sympathy and understanding only in so far as they minister to their psychological or sociological needs. In the phrase which recurs throughout this volume like a lugubrious refrain, it is by their "relevance," or lack of it, to the situations of the students that the humanities are to be approved or condemned.

What "relevance" in this context means is not easy to define. Very often, in this volume, it seems to mean no more than the capacity to induce what the students, and their teachers, hold to be the correct moral and political stance towards such questions as the Viet Nam war, Black Power, and "pig fascism," that is to say, the cops. And perhaps in students who, as some of these papers sadly confess, enter the university without even the most elementary grounding in the subjects they propose to study, so primitive an attitude should not surprise us. What is surprising, and disturbing, is the extent to which their teachers, or at least those of them who are represented here, accept that attitude as their own; accept it indeed as a justified reproof to their own failure to recognise the superior intuition of their students, and as a guide by which they should reform their own activities as teachers and scholars.

IN ESSAY AFTER ESSAY in this volume, the question of "relevance" becomes the central issue for discussion, in most cases on the assumption that the academic tradition of teaching, learning and scholarship is in the wrong and that the students as at this moment are in the right. From the assembled teachers of the humanities, there is an almost unanimous cry of: *Mea culpa!* They had thought that the study of the humanities was of value because it enabled the student to arrive at some understanding of the literature and art of the past; of what further value it might be was not strictly their concern. Not at all! The study of the humanities (and from the

students' point of view there is no reason why any other branch of study should differ) is of value only if it becomes an integral part of the students' immediate experience of the here and now, is in fact an aspect not of learning but of life. Or, rather, of Life, because it goes without saying that, for students and teachers alike, the kind of experience they demand has nothing to do with life as lived by those millions of men and women who do not enjoy their educational and social privileges and are hopelessly, irredeemably, engulfed in that society against which both ostensibly protest.

"RELEVANCE" indeed seems to imply that the study of the humanities should be transformed into a mental and physical hygiene which will, in some way or other, initiate the student into the deepest and darkest mysteries of life. One suggestion, repeated in several papers, for achieving this end is that it would be a good, even an essential thing, if the humanities could somehow achieve a more intimate relation with *the dance*; not merely with the study of the dance, but with dancing itself, which calls for that fine co-ordination of intellectual and physical faculties which should be the objective of the New Learning. One contributor rather sadly confesses that he could not expect from his freshmen and sophomores those years of grim technical training, of grinding work and application which would make ballet a suitable exercise for them; but, he suggests, there are other, freer, more spontaneous forms of callisthenics, involving no kind of hard work, which could easily and with enormous advantage be appropriated into the curriculum.

For myself, I must confess that I find such suggestions, solemnly debated by a conference of university teachers, quite irresistibly comic. They call to mind images of, say, Professor Quine lumbering about the campus as he expounds mathematical logic by gesture and mime, or Professor Chomsky applying dance to demonstrating the relationship between linguistics and the war in Viet Nam. But this is by no means the most absurd of the various forms of therapy to which the humanists of the American Academy have dedicated themselves. For these one should look to the contribution of Herbert Blau, Provost and Dean of the School of Theatre and Dance at the California Institute of the Arts. Professor James S. Ackerman, of Harvard, in his introduction to this volume, pays Mr. Blau's paper the compliment of calling it "apocalyptic"; the compliment is well judged if the right tone for the discussion of academic problems is that favoured by the major prophets.

Mr. Blau's paper is a kind of breakneck steeplechase course in European culture (I am

somewhat mystified that Asia does not come in, except in the form of Zen archery). In a brief but exhausting twenty pages, his frame of reference, starting with Pantagruel as the example of "the lust for totally expanded consciousness," includes Plato, Sartre, Martin Buber, Hermann Hesse, Tolstoy, Marcuse, Beckett, Genet, Rilke, Weiss, Eliot, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Yeats, Céline, Goethe, Camus, Blake, Dürrenmatt, Joyce, Rousseau, Lévi-Strauss, Auden, Freud, and a few others whom I am far too dazed to remember. All these provide grist to Mr. Blau's mill; unfortunately it does not grind very small but seems rather designed to throw off large, indigestible gobbets of chiliastic truths, as if rocks had somehow got into the machine.

ONE OF Mr. Blau's throwaway lines particularly fascinates me. Speaking of himself and his humanist colleagues, he says: "With nearly incredible technique, we scanned the uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor." Now I should like to ask, and not merely in a spirit of vulgar curiosity, on what bestial floors Mr. Blau has scanned what uncontrollable mysteries? Not, surely, at the California Institute of the Arts, or even at New York City's Lincoln Centre, of which Mr. Blau was once Co-Director. The question is not really an improper one, because, according to Mr. Blau, our imperative modern need is for *authenticity* (his italics), that is to say for the direct expression of immediate experience, without any of the obfuscations and ambiguities, the blurring and blunting of the fine sharp edge of life, which is the besetting sin of the traditionally academic attitude to the dark mysteries of life and art.

Mr. Blau himself seems slightly unsure on this issue. Once, it appears, ten years ago, he went to Europe, and this he felt, on grounds of experience, gave him a position of authority from which to talk to his students. But today, he feels, this tiny little pulpit from which he could preach has been destroyed as far as his students are concerned (though he does not hesitate to preach to others).

Literally, increasingly, they have more *experience*. Every day now I encounter students who have seen more of the world than I have seen. Some of them have hitched across the country in the wake of Ginsberg and Kerouac, and others have made their way up and down the coasts of Africa. They have wept beside the Ganges and spent the winter in Khatmandu.

Poor Mr. Blau! Since he has not understood that it is not the business of the humanities to provide experience, but knowledge, which is only one of the many possibilities of experience, he very naturally concludes that, since his students have been further afield than he has, perhaps actually participated in uncontrollable mysteries

on bestial floors, he no longer has anything to teach them and in future can aspire only to learn from them. And this actually is his conclusion, which I can perhaps best express, since I cannot hope to reproduce the subtler overtones of his style, by four quotations from his paper:

What we are all asking for is to reduce the distance between our classes and life, even if it means abandoning our classes. . . .

They [the young] must be convinced at blood level, or they will not be convinced at all. To them, a conviction is a demonstration. If we are growing tired of blood consciousness, then we'd better change our reading lists. . . .

The greatest blessing of our educational system is the refusal of our students to be cloistered, in systems, departments, requirements, or a ratio-cinative meditateness that can destroy. For the time being we have to be where they are, or we are, for the sake of the future, nowhere at all.

Coherence is a continuum of succeeding vacancies into which rushes at every instant the outside possibility of a causeless being, revised, travestied, and birthed by recapitulations of a future hopelessly out of reach.

IT IS OF COURSE dismaying that *Daedalus* should print this kind of rubbish apparently in all seriousness. It is even more dismaying that Mr. Blau's paper merely expresses in an extreme form an attitude of deference amounting to servility on the part of the teacher to the taught, which is to be found in varying degrees in almost all the contributions to this volume. And this, one feels, confers a seriousness on Mr. Blau's views which they would otherwise wholly lack. For if they really reflect the kind of mind which the student may expect to encounter when he enters the university, who can wonder that he should react to it with contempt. The students, it would seem, have been right all along; the professor really is a fink.

*The Future of the Humanities* convinces me that someone should seriously study the phenomenon of student revolt in the light, not of what students think, feel, say or do, but of the kind of intellectual nourishment which they are offered by their teachers. Because if this is really the best the American Academy can do, one must conclude that the "confrontation" with which so much of the volume is concerned is in fact no more than a sham battle. On this showing, the students have only hollow men to contend with; even more, like General Mola before Madrid, they have a fifth column securely entrenched in the enemy capital. The students have no need to take the fortress of learning by assault; if Mr. Blau is anything to go by, its walls are ready to crumble at the first blast of the trumpet.

## The Solitary Revolutionary

*Proudhon's Notebooks* — By GEORGE WOODCOCK

"WHENCE COMES to me this passion for justice, which dominates and provokes and enrages me? I have no means of telling. It is my God, my religion, my all; and if I attempt to justify it by philosophic reasoning, I do not succeed."

Thus Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, self-styled *homme terreur* of the 1848 Revolution, wrote in his notebook three years earlier. Justice, in Proudhon's mind, was indeed the immanent deity according to whose mysterious dictates the life of man should be shaped. In his greatest work, *De la Justice dans la Révolution et dans l'Eglise*, completed in 1858, he made this concept the corner-stone of a vast and bizarre cathedral of libertarian theory and autodidactic learning which he erected in opposition to the edifices of conventional authority represented by the Second Empire and the Catholic Church. The desire to express and realise the principle of justice in concrete, human terms of social and economic relationships as opposed to the abstract, mechanical terms of political relationships, dominated his life as a revolutionary philosopher. Proudhon was convinced that at one and the same time he was the voice in the wilderness and "*la voix du peuple qui sent, qui veut, qui parle et qui fait.*"

Persecuted, imprisoned, exiled and impoverished, detested in his time by the traditional Left as much as by the official Right, Proudhon in the end presented such an example of integrity in the general political breakdown of French politics after the failure of 1848, that from his very isolation sprang a vast posthumous legacy. The Anarchists and the Communards, the Spanish Federalists, Russian *Narodniks*, and French Syndicalists, all claimed him as an ancestor. Tolstoy and Herzen, Kropotkin and Bakunin and Sorel, willingly acknowledged his influence. For less convincing reasons the French royalists, led by Charles Maurras, claimed him as their own, while he has had a

curious fascination for Jesuit theologians. To complete the complexity of his heritage, an American scholar, J. Salwyn Schapiro, advanced some twenty odd years ago the theory that Proudhon was—all unwittingly—a harbinger of Fascism.

Proudhon gloried in the shocking paradox and the extreme statement, and, like Walt Whitman, prided himself on his contradictions. He saw his thought as a product of constant evolution, felt no need to be consistent with himself over any long period, refused to establish or to accept the discipline of a party, and stressed the anti-systematic nature of his thought. "My system? I have no system," Herzen records him as saying to an inquisitive Englishman; and anyone who tackles the mass of his polemical writings on subjects as varied as free credit, federalism, and feminism, Courbet and copyright, war and peace and progress, taxation and theology (not to mention *The Stock Exchange Speculator's Manual* and *On the Observance of Sunday*), will discover a polemical prose which Baudelaire and Flaubert justly admired and will encounter a resilient mind crammed with facts and notions, but may not in the end be aware of a consistent doctrine even as dully cut as that of Marx.

One reason is that Proudhon detested abstractions and absolutes; he strove consistently to see principles realised in concrete and existential forms, and he knew from observing his rivals on the Left how far rigid political dogmas had taken them from the social realities of mid-19th-century France. For this reason alone it is necessary to suspect all the system-makers who have claimed Proudhon. True, he called himself an Anarchist, and the label fitted, but there was much that he did not share with either of the founders of organised Anarchism: Bakunin and Kropotkin. He contributed undoubtedly to both Syndicalism and Federalism. One can even grant to Dr. Schapiro that the Fascists borrowed

from him, mainly indirectly, a few notions and phrases, just as they borrowed a few techniques from Lenin. But to define so extraordinary an individualist as Proudhon merely in terms of movements that arose after his death is as misleading as recent attempts to re-define his nearest English equivalent, William Cobbett, in terms familiar to late-twentieth-century students of politics.

IT IS MORE PROFITABLE with men of Proudhon's genre to recognise the inevitability of the biographical: to view them first as personalities reacting with often irritated sensitivity to a series of social and political situations, and thence to proceed to the ideas that emerge. In this way enduring elements are perceived, and a consistent outlook on existence may be observed behind the continual rectification of attitudes on particular issues. Once we cease to fit labels to Proudhon—even the labels he himself created—we begin to see him whole.

IN THIS PROCESS the intimate documents of his life are essential. Proudhon was a copious and excellent correspondent. The fourteen volumes of his letters not only contain some of his best writing, but also reveal a gentler side of his nature than the polemical works. In reading them one realises why he made so many public enemies, so many private friends. The separate *Lettres de Proudhon à sa Femme* (edited by his grand-daughter Suzanne Henneguy and published as late as 1950) provide an extraordinary insight into his patriarchal family life and his relationship with the uneducated seamstress, Euphrasie Piégard, to whom he proposed without introduction one afternoon in 1847 on a street in the Quartier Latin, and to whom he remained devoted all his life. Still incompletely available to the public are the *Carnets*,<sup>1</sup> the manuscript volumes of notebooks which now, at last, are deposited in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

I first saw the *Carnets* in 1951, when I was beginning to gather material for my book *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon* (1956). During the decade after Proudhon's death, the publisher Lacroix was proposing to present them in an eight-volume edition, but he lost so much on the fourteen volumes of the *Correspondence* (published in 1874-75 when the memory of the

Commune still clouded Proudhon's reputation among the middle class) that he abandoned the project. Except for a few extracts inaccurately reproduced in *La Grande Revue* in 1908, nothing more was heard of the Notebooks until 1944, when Daniel Halévy published in *Hier et Demain* a long article, "Proudhon d'après ses Carnets inédits, 1834-47," which included brief extracts. In 1948, in a life written for Gallimard's series, "Leurs figures," Edouard Dolléans was the first French biographer of Proudhon to make a somewhat limited use of the *Carnets*.

Neither Halévy nor Dolléans gave any clues as to the whereabouts of the *Carnets*, and I found nothing definite until I reached Paris, where Giliane Berneri, daughter of the Italian anarchist Camillo Berneri, introduced me to Alexandre Marc, the European Federalist who had edited a selection of Proudhon's works in 1945. Marc in turn introduced me to the Abbé Pierre Hauptmann, who was studying the relationships between Proudhon and Marx, and from him I discovered that the *Carnets* were in the possession of Mlle Henneguy, who lived in Paris a few streets away from the Rue Serpente, where my wife and I were staying. A few days later Mlle Henneguy sent a note to our hotel, and we walked over the Boulevard St. Michel to the small street off the Rue des Ecoles where she lived, and climbed the stairs, smelling of polish and Gauloises, to her apartment on the second floor.

A small round pigeon of a woman opened the door and hurled shrill French at us like a *mitrailleuse*. She was Suzanne Henneguy, the daughter of Proudhon's eldest child Catherine; she was delighted that I had come all the way from the Canadian coasts of the Pacific to write about her grandfather. For the next fortnight, during which my wife and I spent every afternoon in his apartment, she and her sister, who had married into the family of Gabriel Fauré, treated us with the kind of Franc-Comtois hospitality for which Proudhon's household, even in his times of poverty, was celebrated among his friends (and still, occasionally, we commemorate that time by making a magnificent pudding, filled with rum-soaked *crème de marron*, whose recipe had been handed down from his wife Euphrasie).

Each day, entering the parlour where we worked, we stepped back atmospherically into the age between 1848 and the Commune, to which Proudhon belonged. He had never inhabited this room, though as a young man he had lived in the quarter; but the things among which he had moved were there, and even the things that had not belonged to him recalled the age in all its physical stuffiness and discom-

<sup>1</sup>Two volumes of an edition of Proudhon's *Carnets*, up to the beginning of the 1848 revolution, were published in 1960 by Marcel Rivière in Paris, under the editorship of Abbé Hauptmann.

fort. Voluminous dark red curtains, faded and betasselled with tarnished braid, hung over every doorway and obscured the windows. Armoires, sideboards, a desk, of Second Empire grandiosity, crowded together like the paradoxes in Proudhon's prose, and supported a small museum of bronze stags in combat and marble nymphs and fauns. There were objects that flashed into recognition: here, the square inkwell that stands on the garden steps in Courbet's painting which hangs in the Petit Palais of Proudhon and his daughters, there the steel spectacles with tiny lenses just covering the eyes that appear in all the caricatures from 1848 onwards. Mlle Henneguy switched on a light over a picture we had not before noticed. It was the original of Courbet's best portrait of his friend and political mentor. Out of a dense, dark background, Proudhon's face shone with a lambent brilliance, the great brow of which his contemporaries always talked soaring over the intense eyes, over the square, dogged Comtois face and the shaggy beard.

Every day thereafter the portrait acted as a kind of icon, for it was on a table beneath it that Mlle Henneguy laid out the eleven worn black notebooks we had come to see, and all the time we read and noted, Proudhon's face glowed rather truculently upon us.

THE CARNETS extended from 23 July 1843 to an undated entry of a third of a page at the beginning of 1864, a few weeks before Proudhon's death. The first volume, which spread over two years, was a mere 100 pages long; the last, which covered the ten years from 1854 to Proudhon's death, was the largest, with 592 pages. An earlier notebook, which Proudhon had kept in 1832, when he was a printer at Arbois in the Franche-Comté, has not been preserved.

The *Carnets* were written in a crabbed, crowded handwriting. The early entries in pencil had faded in a century to the ghosts of messages, and the passages in ink were often so minutely written as to be unreadable without a magnifying glass. The damp of prison cells, particularly in the Conciergerie, where Proudhon spent periods in 1849 and 1850, had almost ruined some of the pages. At other places Proudhon had written in haste or anger; the words sprawled towards obscurity. This happened in 1845 when he suspected Heinrich Heine of being a *mouchard* and of having engineered the expulsion from France of the German socialist Karl Grün. When he noted his own arrest on 5 June 1849, for having published a libel on Louis Napoléon, then President of the Second Republic, his hand was so unsteady that one cannot even guess the name of the man he

suspected of having given away his hiding place to the police.

The *Carnets* begin, in 1843, as little more than commonplace books in which Proudhon notes addresses and names, makes calculations regarding the river transport business at Lyons in which he was then employed, and sketches out the basic ideas of such early books as *Economic Contradictions*. Gradually, by 1845, the personal threads that make a true diary take their place among the notes of works to come, and until about 1853 the *Carnets* contain much biographical raw material and some very personal observations on political life. From 1853, after Proudhon had been released from prison and had left the revolutionary Bohemia of his youth for a patriarchal and financially anxious married life, the diary recedes, the *Carnets* once again become notebooks of projects and ideas, and gradually even these thin out until they are worn down to little more than domestic account books.

This diminution of the *Carnets*, Daniel Halévy suggested, corresponds to the exhaustion of a spirit beaten down by excessive work carried on in the midst of the anxieties of constant poverty." This is only partly true. Halévy, a rich man, had a romantic inclination to exaggerate the effects of other people's poverty. The last years of Proudhon's life were in fact extraordinarily productive, both in completed books (he published eight volumes in the three years from 1861-3) and in major unfinished works, like *De la Capacité Politique des Classes Ouvrières* and *Du Principe de l'Art et sa Destination Sociale*, to which his friends and fellow Comtois, Courbet and Gustave Chaudey, put the finishing touches after his death. The drying up of his *Carnets* represented not exhaustion, but a changing technique, a tendency to write his polemical works without preliminary notes. At the same time, during the exile in Brussels from 1858 to 1862, he had acquired the habit of recording personal events and the quality of his daily life in letters to his friends which at this period were numerous, long and lively, giving no sense at all of "exhaustion of spirit."

SOME OF THE MOST INTERESTING portions of the *Carnets* are those in which Proudhon reveals the core beliefs around which his changing ideas circulate and take shape. They appear occasionally in catechismal question-and-answer forms, and often in criticism of the ideas of other men. For example, he works out his conception of God in a series of entries disputing the "humanitarianism" of Feuerbach, written in 1845 when, in the company of Marx, Bakunin and Karl Grün, all then expatriates in Paris, he was discovering German philosophy and going

through his brief inoculation with Hegelianism (as mandatory in the 1840s as McLuhanism appears to be today, and a great deal more productive).

At times Proudhon becomes the populist art theoretician. He prided himself—justly—on being a prose stylist, and, as the long essay on Courbet which he was writing at the time of his death demonstrates, he had strong ideas on the social relevance of art. Anything that detached art from life, from the actual struggle that was the glory of existence, he disliked; Offenbach he loathed as a symbol of all that was corrupt and artificial in the Second Empire. At the same time, though he was a “social realist” of a kind, he did not conceive art as propaganda. As many extracts from his *Carnets* show, he thought that to survive, art must be public and accessible to the non-artist; basically, his attitude was much like that of George Orwell in our own day.

Towards people as individuals Proudhon reacted decisively. His likes and dislikes were strong, and it was the dislikes that he expressed

most eloquently. His *Carnets*, like his letters, are studded with brief, pungent sketches of the people he met in his life as a revolutionary in the years around 1848; the great actress Rachel, whom he detested because she stirred emotions which he feared; George Sand and the Comtesse d'Agoult, admirers who provoked in him the distrust he felt for all bluestockings; his rivals among the socialists—Cabet, Leroux, Marx—and the ambiguous figures who floated on the surface of French society in the reigns of Louis Philippe and Louis Napoleon.

THE RELATIONSHIP of the sexes always troubled Proudhon, and many passages in the *Carnets* relate to women and love and marriage. Proudhon's attitude to women has often been described as reactionary. He believed that they had no place in public life, but lived as moons to their spouses; essentially neutral, they received their morality from men.

Chastity has its principle in man; it belongs only to him and comes from him alone. Woman

*God and man, neither is more than the other; they are two incomplete realities, which have no fullness of existence.*

*God is necessary to reason but rejected by reason.*

*Money is the only God that makes no hypocrites. One never sees men pretending to love of money as others pretend to love of God or of their neighbour; they pretend rather not to love it, which is a subtle way of proving their love.*

*Work creates out of nothing, like God.*

*The new socialist movement will begin with the war of the workshop.*

*The true school is the workshop.*

*The social revolution is seriously compromised if it comes through a political revolution.*

*Man, according to the Scriptures, lives not by bread alone, but by knowledge. In the matter of love I say: man lives not by meat alone, but by love.*

*No hatred, no hatred. Eliminate by principle.*

*All discussion is in vain without anger.*

*I can be neither spiritualist, nor materialist, nor atheist, nor humanist, and when I have driven away all these mysticisms, I find myself at grips with an even greater mysticism, justice, which is the mystery of mysteries.*

*I am told not to be troubled by the depth of the heavens. But this question does trouble me, and even more when I discover that in*

*this question lies that of knowing whether there is a God or not.*

*Ever since I came into the world I have felt myself dying.*

*What is religion? It is a dream.*

*What is philosophy? An hallucination.*

*What is property? It is theft.*

*What is communism? It is death.*

*What is royalty? A myth.*

*What is democracy? Chaos.*

*What is criminal justice? A snare.*

*What is God? An abstraction.*

*What is the immortality of the soul? It is despair. Resignation is the virtue of dupes.*

*What is Necessity? It is the Law. Summa lex, summa necessitas.*

*What is chastity? The highest expression of love.*

*What is marriage? The fullness of the human personality.*

*What is Association? The systematisation of industrial forces according to the relationship of functions and products. It is at once the most necessary and the most difficult thing of all.*

*What is justice? The objective calculation of the relations between workers.*

*What is man? No more than nature, arrived at self-consciousness.*

(CARNETS: c. August 1843)

allows the law of chastity to be imposed upon her, accepts it, submits unreflectingly to it with a kind of indifference, with the same docility with which she gives herself up to sensuality, capable of passing from one to the other, and of being in turn Venus and the Virgin Mary. Basically, and in general, woman is neither chaste nor immodest. She is what her husband would like her to be.

Women belong therefore in the home, where their functions are supreme. Proudhon did not suggest that they are actually inferior; their capacities are merely different from those of men, and, properly understood, complement his. He reacted vehemently against the feminism of the followers of Fourier, which he felt was connected with the strain of libertinism he found in their doctrines. "The Phalansterians elevate sensuality to the heavens," he once noted. "Enjoyment, for them, is all of man. *You are disgusting!* is my last word." But, conservative though such a viewpoint may appear, it cannot—as Schapiro attempted to do in his denunciation of Proudhon<sup>2</sup>—be taken as evidence of incipient fascism; it reflected pretty faithfully the attitude of French working men in Proudhon's time, as did many of the points on which he differed from the doctrinaire socialists, and it was sustained by his working-class followers in the First International, who combined an opposition to feminism with an anti-bourgeois animus which made them seek to keep all but manual workers out of the IWMA.

Proudhon's attitude towards love showed a curious mixture of the exalted and the utilitarian. Reflecting on his youth at the age of 28, he noted:

I know today what at twenty made my spirit so full, so loving, so enraptured; what made women seem to me so angelic, so divine; what in my dreams of love (wherein faith in God, in the immortal soul, in religious practice, mingled and combined with faith in infinite love) made my religion so precious to me.... I was Christian because I was in love, in love because I was Christian—I mean religious.

Passing through a phase in which he doused his sensuality with "refrigerants," he weighed carefully the justifications for marriage:

Would you be completely free in reason, in imagination, in industry? Then do not marry. Would you be free and a lover, both at the same time? The best thing is to marry. The question is to know whether you want to or can do without love.

<sup>2</sup> "Pierre Joseph Proudhon, Harbinger of Fascism," *American Historical Review*, July 1945.

Having made his decision, he began his eccentric courtship of Euphrasie Piégard, under an assumed name and for two years in secrecy from even his closest friends. Even his *Carnets* were almost silent about it. A few brief notations (e.g., "Euphrasie P. does not reply to me. What is happening?" in December 1847) are all we have until his marriage on 31 December 1849, while in Sainte Pélagie Prison. According to the civilised treatment of political prisoners in mid-19th-century France, he was allowed a day out every week to attend to such matters of private business. "I have only one regret, and that is not to have made this marriage four years ago," was all he said then; and a little later, in February 1850, he noted: "In all, during six weeks of marriage, I have slept three times with my wife, a fact I am far from lamenting. It is not good, in my view, always to be together." Later in the same month he added, "I am captive but I am very happy." And that was almost all he had to say in the *Carnets* about his marriage, or, indeed, from that time on, about women in general. His doubts and curiosities were satisfied, and a union that began so oddly appears to have been extraordinarily successful.

PERHAPS the most important passages of the *Carnets* are those which reinforce the evidence of Proudhon's life and of his most important writings that Marx's definition of him as a petit-bourgeois was nonsense, and that suggestions—like those of Professor Schapiro—that he was a harbinger of bourgeois revolutionism (or of Fascism) and sustained a "hostility to labour" come from an extraordinary misreading of the facts. These characterisations of Proudhon can only be perpetrated by ignoring deliberately his last important work, *De la Capacité Politique des Classes Ouvrières*, which is a complete rejection of the bourgeoisie as a revolutionary force in our time, and by closing one's eyes to the fact that it was his personal disciples who founded the International in France, according to his doctrines, an achievement he lived just long enough to welcome on his death-bed.

During the early years of the *Carnets*, Proudhon was living mostly in Lyons, where he associated with the Mutualists, a group of working-class socialists, mainly silk weavers, who refused to follow the lead of any of the middle-class socialist theoreticians of the time, but evolved their own ideas on producers' association. Proudhon and Flora Tristan were both much taken with the idea, and Proudhon welded on to it his own theories of free credit



and the People's Bank as a means of exchange among producers. The idea of the Association as an international movement in the 1840s was really the precursor of that of the International in the 1860s, and in this way Proudhon's goals were throughout his career in the mainstream of working-class (as distinct from bourgeois socialist) thought in the mid-19th century. In the spring of 1843 he had fantastic hopes for the Association; it was one of those crystal-clear ideas whose fulfilment seems so inevitable when one is twenty-five. He saw it as a great voluntary movement of the workers, perfectly organised, peacefully pushing out the exploiters, throwing up its own managers (Proudhon, of course, among them!) and recruiting all the

scattered socialist groups of the time under one banner.

Appeal to the Phalansterians, who will all come [he noted]. Communists will come also. We are 100,000.... By 1860, the globe will be over-run by the Association.

The thesis of *De la Capacité Politique*—that the working class must stand on its own efforts to achieve social transformation, and has the power to do so—is stated already twenty years earlier in the *Carnets*:

The proletariat is a new force which should rely only on itself. Whatever I have said about capital and power applies to the bourgeoisie, to

#### ON SEEING ROSSINI'S "WILLIAM TELL"

...In listening to that music it seemed to me more than ever that no work of art in our times will stand as a whole; it all needs re-working. What we see are not spectacles, but mutilated fragments of spectacles.

Tragedy, comedy and music have independently reached a high point of perfection, but as they have not reached it simultaneously, the performance cannot attain completeness. Modern composers need new libretti, and they do not find the poets to write them....

The theatrical spectacle can exist only as a collective product; for that everything in society must be remodelled: the education of the masses, the security of labour, and the more equal sharing of its products. A dancer is forced to supplement her wages by trafficking in her charms. Operatic chorus girls are in the same position as seamstresses....

The more I reflect on what is needed for the renewal of art and of society, the more convinced I am that a revolutionary movement is indispensable. For, since ideas move more quickly than action, the people, once they are educated, will be in no mood to wait. We must therefore push on the downfall of the dynasty.... (23 August 1843)

#### ON THE PROPER PLACE OF A MODERN ART

Artists in the past had only to follow a world of ready-made ideas; but today, when the old faith has disappeared, the artist must substitute, for that which no one any longer believes in, a philosophy drawn from his own resources, and that seems difficult to men who reason so little.

Public places, theatres, academies, classrooms, gymnasia, concert halls, and dance halls, cafés, town halls, libraries, etc., it is these which art should adorn and embellish without counting on domestic patronage....

*A museum is not the destination for works of art; it is simply a place of study and passage, a collection of antiques, of things which, owing to circumstances, can be placed nowhere else. They are the pensioners among beautiful things which a progressive civilisation puts out of use.* (1845)

#### ON SEEING RACHEL IN "PHÈDRE"

From beginning to end of the tragedy she seemed like an old tart in love with a handsome boy, and in the grip of an attack of hysteria.... When Rachel moves one, it is by grating on one's nerves, not by touching one's feelings. (1843)

#### ON ETIENNE CABET

I distrust Cabet: he is religious, proprietary, dictatorial, intolerant, arrogant, intriguing. Watch out! (1845)

#### ON KARL MARX

Marx is the tapeworm of socialism. (1846)

#### ON BEING CALLED TO VISIT LOUIS NAPOLEON

Visit to Louis Bonaparte. This man appears well-intentioned, chivalrous head and heart; more filled with the glory of his uncle than with a strong ambition. At the same time, a mediocre intellect.... For the rest, be on your guard. It is the custom of every pretender to seek out first of all the heads of the parties. (26 September 1848)

#### ON BEING VISITED IN PRISON BY GEORGE SAND

A long, cold, tired face; a woman of great good sense, simple good heart and little passion, her speech curt, clear, positive and simple. G. Sand has burnt the candle at both ends, rather, I believe, from fancy than from sensuality or passion.... She is too mannish, too poised, too sedate.... Nothing in her, nothing, nothing of the feminine! (February 1852)



any kind of aristocracy, and for this reason, not only is no government and no authority compatible with the principle of mutuality, but no authority can aid in the work of reform. For all authority is opposed to equality and justice; hence it would be a contradiction for us to come to terms with the partisans of royalty or the representatives of parliamentary rule, or for that matter of property or Communism.

From this first moment we must live to ourselves and to ourselves alone.

And, a little later, this:

Today it is to the workshop that the genius of humanity is directed. It is there we shall find the heroes of the new republic; it is there—awaiting the hour of deliverance—that suffer the noble hearts and great characters of the century to come.

During the events of 1848 Proudhon remained an independent revolutionary attached to no party, since he could not see any with a constructive programme. "The mess is going to be inextricable.... They have made a revolution without ideas," he noted on 23 February. On the next day, after taking part in the assault on the Tuileries, he added, "They have nothing in their heads." Most of the revolutionaries of that time in fact had their heads stuffed with the notions of 1793, and the consequences which Proudhon dimly foresaw followed—the brief and bloody civil war between the workers and the bourgeois revolutionaries in June 1848, and the election of Louis Napoleon by popular suffrage in 1849, followed by his *coup d'état* on 2 December 1852. In his paper, *Le Représentant du Peuple*, Proudhon was one of the few writers courageous enough, at that time of kangaroo courts and proscriptions, to defend the June rebels. On 23 June he noted in the *Carnets*:

The terror reigns in the capital, not a Terror like that of '93, but the terror of the civil and social war.... What is beginning here is what has always been seen: each new idea has its baptism; the first to propagate it—misunderstood and impatient—get themselves killed for too much philosophic independence.

And, on the 28th: "The ill will of the Assembly was the cause of the insurrection." These notes lead up to the famous debate in the Assembly on 31 July, in which Proudhon demanded the "liquidation of the old society," and declared that if the propertied classes did not agree "we ourselves shall proceed to the liquidation without you." Asked whom he meant by *you*, Proudhon answered: "When I used those two pronouns, *you* and *we*, it is evident that I was identifying *myself* with the proletariat and *you* with the bourgeois class." So much for the argument that Proudhon was hostile to labour and preached the "bourgeois revolution"!

Now we come to the light which the *Carnets* throw on the most controversial of Proudhon's books, *La Révolution sociale démontrée par le Coup d'Etat du 2 Décembre*. In this book Proudhon argued that, whether he willed it or not, history had put Louis Napoleon in the position where he could bring about a revolutionary transformation in society; he called on him to accept the challenge. Proudhon's critics have taken this to mean that he approved of the *coup d'état*. His diary for the vital day, 2 December 1851, and for the subsequent days, shows his complex feelings at this time.

2nd December. I... walked through the capital and observed the population. Faces were sad, and all minds were overwhelmed. The fact is that, while not counting in any way on the good faith or prudence of the President, nobody expected that he would risk such a crime.

3rd December. Never has such an assault been committed on the good faith of a nation.... The insult is too sharp; the nation is lost if it gives in.

4th December. I rise at 5.30 in the morning; I have had a feverish and inflammatory sleep, with intolerable beating of the arteries.... If I were free, I would bury myself under the ruins of the Republic with her faithful citizens, or else I would go to live far from a land unworthy of liberty.

5th December. How right I was, in 1843, to cry out against that absurdity of universal suffrage. No, the masses are not and will not for a long time be capable of a good action for themselves.

10th December. Through the defection of the working class, France has lost the battle.

14th December. She [Mme Suchet] confirms the news of the shooting of citizens taken at the barricades.... Thus, he is not content to defend himself; he has not even recoiled before massacre, before crime. France is under oppression. The insolence of the conquerors knows no bounds; indignation is growing.

15th December. A sign of Parisian stupidity. Most people go about repeating, with B's newspapers, that without the *coup d'état*, we should have had the revolution, that is to say, pillage, arson, murder, robbery. And they have under their eyes the atrocities, the nameless atrocities, of the army!

From these extracts it is clear that Proudhon was appalled by the actions of Napoleon. At the time, he felt the people were to blame because they had voted Napoleon into office. This was the only time when, for a few months, he was disillusioned with the workers of France. By the following October he had recovered his faith enough to note: "We affirm the possibility of educating the people." But he remained suspicious of universal suffrage, not because he was anti-democratic, but because he felt—like the archists after him—that the vote was an

abdication of responsibility and an invitation to tyrants; other ways must be found to express the popular will. With the change from a political to a social and economic organisation of society, he believed this could be done and that it would result in an increase of freedom.

THE EFFECT OF Proudhon's temporary disillusionment with the people was that it led him

A CRITIC should be the expression of the public, rather than of art itself, because art is made for the public, and it is not for art to judge itself. No doubt it is useful to know the opinion of artists, and to listen to their reasons, but it is for the public to weigh them and pronounce on them. If an artist wishes to give an account of the effect he aimed at providing, of the means he has employed, all well and good. But it is for me, the public, for me alone to see whether he has succeeded. I have no need to know what he should have done; I limit myself to saying that he has not succeeded. I do not know how you would draw a statue out of this block: but I shall certainly see whether it is a statue, and I shall see moreover whether it is beautiful.

I would like literary criticism to be done by mathematicians, jurists, scholars; art criticism by philosophers and business men; criticism of the theatre, music, dance, mime and elocution by historians and philologists.

Criticism carried out by people in the same field is mere babbling, an unintelligible jargon which all the ninnies and chatterers hasten to ape in order to give themselves airs.

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How is it that such a simple thing has never been understood? LABOUR IS MONEY. And if labour is money, CAPITAL exists; what more does one ask? If capital is no more than an expression, a realisation, of work, it is a perishable expression and realisation, since it is fatally destined to be consumed (to perish); labour itself is immaterial, imperishable, unconsumable, immortal, always living and always creative, always tending sponte sua, by its own virtue and without external help, towards realisation; one need only leave it FREE to bring about its release, its exteriorisation.

Thus whoever has labour has capital; the first and only source of funds; he has money, wealth, security, guarantee, he has power, not shut up in a coffer and easily spent, but lodged in the heart and brain of Humanity, which are inexhaustible treasures.

(CARNETS, 1845)

to gamble desperately on the old illusion that a benevolent despot might carry out what the revolutionaries had failed to do. The Digger Winstanley appealed in the same way to Cromwell; and Bakunin for a while placed his faith in the autocratic Count Muraviev. Proudhon's reason was clear, stated in a note in the *Carnets* for October 1852. "The revolution always advances, making use of each individual, of each interest, of each tongue." Like Tolstoy, he saw famous men as the prisoners of history. He believed that Napoleon could be made to serve his—Proudhon's—ideals; he had no intention of serving Napoleon's purposes; and when he realised, in September 1852, that "L.N. goes to the bourgeoisie," he immediately rejected him. At worst, he made in *La Révolution sociale* a tactical error, not an abdication of principles. Certainly, the incident shows him in no way as a reactionary.

The gravest thing the *Carnets* reveal to 20th-century eyes is a strain of anti-Jewish feeling in Proudhon during the 1840s. Today, with Auschwitz in our memories, we give more importance to this than to prejudice against other communities; dislike of the Jew is, even more than dislike of the Negro, the hallmark of the reactionary. It is impossible for us not to be troubled and angry when we read anything that suggests racial prejudice.

Yet one must differentiate historically between the anti-Semitism of the Nazis and the Black Hundreds, the single-minded obsession that resulted in the worst holocaust of a bloody century, and the anti-Jewish feelings that were endemic in early and in mid-19th-century radical movements, which infected Cobbett as much as Proudhon, which touched even Marx (as Camillo Berneri showed during the 1930s in *Le Juif Anti-Sémite*), which shifted to the Right in France during the Dreyfus Affair, but which even after that time cropped up in American Populism and which have lived on among Russian Bolsheviks to this day. The myth of Jewish financial supremacy was then widely believed among socialists, and the ubiquity of the Rothschilds as statesmen-financiers gave an appearance of authenticity to the idea.

It is clear from Proudhon's *Carnets* that it is to the exclusiveness of the Jews as a special community, as a kind of religious caste within European society that he objects, as Marx the liberated Jew objected, and as Russian officials still object. In 1847 he notes:

When Crémieux speaks at the tribune, on any question where Christianity is engaged, directly or indirectly, he is careful to say: your faith, which is not mine; your God, your Christ, your Gospel, your brothers in Lebanon.

This is what all the Jews do; they are in agreement with us on all points, in so far as they can draw advantage from it, but they are always careful to exclude themselves. They keep themselves apart!

Elsewhere he asked for the "fusion" of the Jews into the French community. Clearly his idea was assimilation, the breaking down of the social enclave in which the orthodox Jew chooses to live. This was not merely an idea relatively frequently held by socialists at the time, but also a projection of the intense patriotism which Proudhon—like Cobbett—cultivated at the same time as his radicalism. Just as Cobbett felt uncomfortable with all but true-blue southern English countrymen, so Proudhon felt uncomfortable with all but solid French peasants and artisans. All the world else—except for a few Russian *narodnik* noblemen—he despised or hated. And, just as Cobbett's anti-Jewishness deflates when we realise that he hated Anglican clergymen as much as Jews, and Quakers even more, so does Proudhon's when we read in his *Carnets* the phrase: "Hatred of the Jews, *as of the English*, should be an article of our political faith." Nobody, to my knowledge, has become very much concerned over Proudhon's Anglophobia.

Finally, it should be remembered that 1847, the year in which Proudhon's statements against the Jews were most intemperate, was also the year in which he suspected Heine of being a "police spy" and in which Marx attacked him so bitterly in *The Philosophy of Poverty*. A decade later he showed little sign of anti-Jewish prejudice and at his trial in 1858 actually engaged Crémieux as his lawyer.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY was a time when men hated wholesale and without disguising the fact, for politics and revolution were held to be passionate occupations, but usually without doing a great deal of harm in the process. We have since seen how Fascism and Nazism took up these hatreds and expanded them into monstrous doctrines of systematic extermination. But this does not mean that every man in the 19th century who expressed a dislike of Jews was a proto-Fascist, any more than every man who proclaims a dislike of Americans today is a crypto-Maoist. Men have to be seen, virtues and faults entire, in the jungle of their own time, not in ours. Only then, paradoxically, do their messages have meaning for us, as Proudhon's criticisms of authoritarian government certainly do today, is an age when the dismantling of the great states and the decentralisation of social and economic life, for which he stood, have become inevitable and will take place destruc-

tively if we do not choose to bring them about by rational and peaceful means.

ALL THIS HAS BEEN emphasised in both Europe and the Americas during the quasi-revolutionary events of the past two years and, with a great deal of appropriateness, in those of France especially. In the summer of 1968 the French students and workers put on a creditable re-enactment of the events of 1848, with the difference that de Gaulle was of different mettle from Louis Philippe, the Bourgeois King, and his tactical retreat was merely the prelude to a brief return which would certainly not have astonished Proudhon with his scepticism regarding universal suffrage.

It is not difficult to imagine what Proudhon would have done had he appeared, in his steel spectacles and long greenish *redingote*, as a revenant in those streets of the Quartier Latin that were so long his world. Proudhon was not a physical activist, but he was sufficiently carried away by the emotions of 1848 to help build a barricade and to fell a tree in the February days, and he was present at the sacking of the Tuileries. No doubt in 1968 too he would have been present, marching in a demonstration or two; tearing up his little pile of paving cobbles, but most of all observing and recording with pungent individuality his impressions of the time. No doubt he would have fearlessly protested at police brutalities, as he did in the June days of 1848; he would have detected the emergence of a new force among the embattled students at the same time as he criticised their lack of any real sense of what they meant to do with the revolution when they got it; he would have disliked M. Cohn-Bendit at first meeting and denounced him at second. His closest sympathies would have been with the young workers who defied the Communist union bureaucrats and sought to bring back to French unionism some of the lost anarcho-syndicalist fire and idealism which he and his followers imparted to the French labour movement.

But, most of all, we can imagine him noting, with the self-pride he never lacked, how events in 1968 bore out what he had said more than a hundred years before. The critic of Polish and Italian Nationalism—at a time when the patriots of these nations were the heroes of liberal and revolutionary Europe—would have found plenty to criticise in the resurgent nationalisms of the 1960s; neither Israel nor the Arab States would have escaped his condemnation or have failed to produce a sermon on the virtues of federalism as a solution to the problems of insoluble frontiers. The rising local and racial patriotisms, of Bretons in France and French in Canada, of

Welsh in Britain and Flemings in Belgium, he would have treated with a characteristic anarchist distinction. He would have encouraged their desire for local autonomy (did he not once claim that his native Franche-Comté might perhaps be better off in federal Switzerland?), but he would have urged upon them the need to seek their ends through decentralised cantonalism rather than by creating new national states to increase the danger of wars and lessen the freedom of communication.

The enemy of the State would have noted, on the one hand, the vast proliferation of governmental powers, especially in his own field of propaganda. (By nature a reclusive warrior of the pen, he would have made a poor show on television, unlike Bakunin who would have been a natural for the video screen.) He would have observed accurately the improvements which a later autocrat, also brought to power by the combination of *coup d'état* and universal suffrage, had made on the techniques of that earlier expert in mass-supported authority, his contemporary Louis Napoleon. But he would have noted, with a sharp but unillusioned eye, the weaknesses which its own centralisation and

rigidity had brought to the modern state, as revealed during the May days of 1968.

Undoubtedly some aspects of modern youth movements would have aroused the denunciatory ire of that intensely moral French working man of the 1840s. He would have been disturbed by the sexual revolution, and would have found many contemporary manifestations in the arts as revolting as Offenbach and as disconcerting as Rachel; he would have found bluestockings in mini-skirts as appalling as George Sand in trousers. But in denouncing the cult of affluent living which often makes the 1960s so reminiscent of the last days of the Second Empire, he would have been entirely at one with the young revolutionary ascetics of today.

Indeed, it is more easy to imagine Proudhon, with his flexible and foresightful mind, settling protestingly but not incongruously into the 1960s than any of his more rigid-minded socialist contemporaries. Most of his central ideas, with very little adaptation, can be used as touchstones for the trends and events of our times, and to make statements which enable men a century later to look at their world with more perception is surely the only true prophetic art.

## The Looting

This parish has been plundered  
 The poets have been here  
 Ransacking, ruining, denuding  
 Everything worth taking is gone  
 Sequestered pools polluted  
 The tallest oaks defrocked  
 The very skies defiled  
 Stars destroyed  
 Vandals filching  
 Locusts flashing  
 (That girl on the urn  
 Has thighs made of stone)  
 Flesh they turn to foam  
 And hurl the lovers from a cliff they've made  
 I've seen them disembowel the sun

Nothing is safe  
 I woke this morning thinking of someone I  
     swore I'd never mention  
 Just out of public decency  
 He was already in a poem

Larry Rubin

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# F I L M

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## Whatever Happened to Godard?

By John Weightman

*LE GAI SAVOIR*, which I have just seen at the ICA, is such a silly and pretentious film that one cannot help wondering what Jean-Luc Godard is now up to. The hand-outs say that it was begun as a documentary on education, commissioned by French television, but that it has so far been banned in France. I cannot understand why; the censors must be even more obtuse than one supposes if they fear that such a tedious work might arouse dangerous passions, apart from acute irritation with M. Godard himself. Perhaps, after all, they rejected it simply because it is bad. It is even a *tour de force* of badness. In purporting to deal with education, Godard manages to be more boring and irrelevant than the most boring Sorbonne professor. God knows, I have sat through some scores of dreary *discours en trois points*, but they had more to them than this vapid verbalisation, which can only be considered as a form of cinematographic suicide.

I have never been an unconditional admirer of Godard, but I have always before found brilliant passages in his films and felt that, in his slapdash way, he had his finger on some modern nerve. Genuineness is even rarer in the cinema than in most other forms of art, and Godard seemed to be genuine, like the early Bergman. So much of what is considered as "good" cinema—dare I breathe the names of Buñuel, Renoir, Hitchcock?—seems to me to have something arranged and meretricious about it. Godard's very defects appeared to make him direct and personal; he used the camera in a rapid, elliptical style to catch life on the wing. If an actor stumbled during a take, he might well

leave the stumble in to give an impression of irrational authenticity. His work was, one gathered, entirely his own, with no concessions to committee feeling or commercial tactics.

I must have seen about a dozen films by him,<sup>1</sup> but I haven't a very clear idea of the order in which they were produced. The first I went to was *A bout de souffle*, and I remember queueing in the cold in Paris one Christmas, because the new film was all the rage and Jean-Paul Sartre, who was then still a public figure to be reckoned with, had declared that it was "*un très beau film*." There was also a queue when I saw *Pierrot le fou* at the Cameo-Polytechnic. But all the others—*Bande à part*, *Le Petit Soldat*, *Une Femme Mariée*, *Une Femme est une Femme*, *Masculin-Féminin*, *Week-End*, *La Chinoise*, *One plus One*—are associated in my mind with deserted halls and back-streets whether in Paris or in London. The bulk of Godard's films must have made comparatively little money, and his world-wide reputation is hardly based at all on popular success.

He declares (in an interview, which is part of the ICA handout) that his early films belonged to his "hippie" period, corresponding to "a bourgeois philosophy," and that the events of May 1968 hastened his mental evolution by at least five years. As I understand it, he is saying that he has moved from non-commitment or half-commitment to total commitment. I remember commenting, at the time of *A bout de souffle*, on the paradoxical fact that Sartre, the apostle of commitment, should have praised a film which was a romantic idealisation of an outlaw, based not on real life but on the alienated fictional hero, played so many times by Humphrey Bogart. (On reflection, the paradox is not as surprising as all that, since nihilistic despair has always been one pole of the Sartrean philosophy.) *Pierrot le fou* was in many respects a remake of *A bout de souffle*, and both films had a strong affinity with *Bande à part*. I

<sup>1</sup> I missed *Vivre sa vie* and *Made in U.S.A.*, saw only extracts of *Les Carabiniers* and can remember nothing of *Le Mépris* except that it took place in a dream-like Mediterranean villa and Michel Piccoli kept his hat on in the bath.

imagine that it was partly through the examples of these films that the Americans were encouraged to make *Bonnie and Clyde*, a still more systematic idealisation of the outlaw. The mixture of anti-conventionalism, aestheticism and black humour is almost the same in *Pierrot le fou* as in *Bonnie and Clyde*, although the latter is a much more finished product. In other words, Godard took something from American films, applied it brilliantly in a French setting, and thus mediated it back to America.

WHEN HE NOW dismisses this something as "bourgeois," I suppose he means that the outlaw is simply a sentimental anarchist whose struggle against society is bound to end quickly and ineffectually in death. *A bout de souffle* was badly translated as "Breathless"; it implies that the gangster on the run is at his last gasp. *Pierrot le fou* is a crazy middle-class drop-out with no future. The trio in *Bande à part* can only live their marginal life for a limited time. Moreover, the position of these heroes is corrupted by treachery, which is an additional shadow that society as a whole casts over the private universe of the outlaw. The gangster is betrayed to the police by his occasional mistress; Pierrot is in love with an international agent, i.e., a servant of society or big business; one of the trio in *Bande à part* deceives the others through yielding to the profit motive, the main-spring of bourgeois capitalism. These films are, consequently, tragedies, because their heroes are trying to live against the grain and are doubly betrayed by society. In spite of their underlying sentimentality, which is rather naïve, they contain charmingly poetic passages: the love-making to the sound of "*Travailler en musique*" in *A bout de souffle*; the pastoral wanderings in *Pierrot le fou* and, best of all, the café dance sequence in *Bande à part*. The beauty of these episodes lies in the lyrical appreciation of life, even in extreme or hopeless situations. At its best, the cinema is even more effective than the novel in conveying those important but almost indefinable emotions that cling around the processes of living. In these films, as I remember them, Godard excels in rendering the raw, yet touching, unreliability of human relationships.

Something of this same quality is to be found in four other films: *Le Petit Soldat*, *Une Femme Mariée*, *Une Femme est une Femme* and *Masculin-Féminin*. All of these are rather scrappy, as if Godard hadn't quite made up his mind what themes he really wanted to deal with. *Le Petit Soldat*, for instance, is supposed to be about terrorism connected with the Algerian War, yet it handles the subject in a curiously private and unexpected way. Perhaps, in some

respects, this is a strength; torture may be an intimate and sordid matter that goes on in a bathroom, without any obvious reference to general principles, rather as if one suddenly found oneself obliged to wash a recalcitrant baby. This again is the immediate stuff of life, and for that reason bits of the film are memorable, but there was no overall artistic impression. I would say the same about *Une Femme Mariée* and *Masculin-Féminin*, which were like notes for films that Godard was fumbling towards but had not quite bothered to make. He is implying in the first that the boredom of middle-class adultery is almost equivalent to the hum-drum security of married life, and in the second that young people live together untidily, like kittens or puppies, without fully understanding themselves or each other. Well and good, but possibly he is misled by the immediate realism of the camera into thinking that any fragments of life can be juxtaposed, and that connections and conclusions can be as arbitrary as one likes. It is true that, from the human point of view, fate is quite arbitrary; a young man might well fall to his death from an unfinished building for no apparent reason, as in *Masculin-Féminin*; but the artistic problem of the implausible possible goes back as far as Aristotle. Godard often gives the impression of exaggerating the twists and turns of life merely because he is too undisciplined or too anti-intellectual to devise a pattern. He chops his films up into numbered sections or has a voice making pseudo-links, but this merely emphasises the defect.

*Une Femme est une Femme* is easily the most successful work in this group, and perhaps the only endearing film that Godard has ever made. In spite of some uncertainties, this story of a striptease artist with domestic longings dodging between two men, one too reliable the other too unreliable, is very delicately carried out, with the slightly musty poetry of *sous les toits de Paris*. Possibly (if the relative dates fit), Godard had seen Truffaut's *Jules et Jim* and wanted to do something along the same lines, but more glancing and acid. It is also the most discreetly adorning of all his treatments of Anna Karina.

*LA CHINOISE*, *Week-End*, *One Plus One* and, now, *Le Gai Savoir* fall into a quite different category, since they show a direct pre-occupation with social satire and political activity. The first was made before the Events of May and now appears to have been remarkably prophetic of the mood of certain sections of French youth. Strangely enough, it could be interpreted as a very bitter comment on the political irresponsibility of young people who

engage in action largely as a way of working off their irritation with life in general. The title, *La Chinoise* is in the feminine because it refers either to the Maoist cell around which the story centres or to the main character (played by the present Mme Godard), an unpleasant, pouting young bourgeoisie who, in the absence of her parents, uses the family flat as the headquarters of the cell. The ignorant, footling and dogmatic conversation of the young people is profoundly depressing, whether or not Godard means it to be so. A long sequence in the middle of the film—shot, for no reason at all, in a moving train—consists of an interview with Francis Jeanson, no mean anti-bourgeois, who points out at length to the heroine how jejune her ideas are. But she is not discouraged and goes on to plan a political assassination, in which she actually shoots the wrong man, because she makes a mistake about the number of the intended victim's flat. No remorse appears to be felt; the error is just one of life's little ironies. All this adds up to a situation which seems true enough of the modern world, but is quite repugnant. As so many middle-aged people have pointed out, there is not much to choose between this aggressive hooliganism with a Left-wing flavour and the destructive activism which was eventually channelled into Nazism. Godard's subsequent development would lead one to suppose that he sympathises with the heroine; at the same time, he presents her as such a self-assertive, unfeeling, and stupid girl, who has simply inverted her bourgeoisism (for instance, she listens to Peking on a Braun portable radio, the most expensive of all models—£200 plus at the moment in England) that he appears to be demolishing the cause he now claims to support. I put this point recently to a wealthy young Italian lady intellectual with whom I happened to find myself discussing the modern movement, and her response was the predictable with-it remark: "But what does coherence matter?..."

COHERENCE was certainly never Godard's strong suit and he now seems to have abandoned it altogether. *Week-End*, which contains some fine sequences, and in particular a splendid traffic jam, is not even comprehensible in parts, because the background music drowns out the voices. It appears to be an attack on the consumer society, which is seen as consisting of motor-cars, eroticism, and a denial of the imaginative faculty. Civilisation grinds to a halt and the drop-outs take to the woods, where they live as cannibals, ritually slaughtering captured

motorists. This is a good black joke, but it is not properly rooted in any convincing picture of society. I agree that the invention of the motor-car can be considered as a disaster—would that humanity had never advanced beyond the pedal-bicycle, that beautiful compromise between mechanisation and the human frame!—yet, much as I detest cars, I cannot believe that it is the materialism of modern life\* that is wrong. The hedonistic materialistic consumer society has done more to alleviate human suffering in my life-time than could reasonably have been expected. I would rather have modern France, for instance, motor-cars and all, than pre-1914 France as I know it from literature. Nor do I see any need to deplore eroticism as reprehensible in itself, if individuals are free and birth-control is institutionalised; it becomes, in fact, a private hobby, a poetico-theatrical pastime, pleasing to certain temperaments. The problem is how to make contemporary life metaphysically significant and interesting, now that metaphysics has become virtually impossible, and how to give politics, in particular, a metaphysical dimension. I suspect, from these films, that Godard is tempted by barbarism, violence, and destruction, more than he is repelled by materialism. And the temptation is a symptom which upsets his work, rather than an element which has been assimilated into it.

He is trying to be an overt critic of society, when his own sensibility is all at sixes and sevens. This means that he inflicts upon the spectator a lot of half-baked stuff which is neither enlightening politically nor adequate artistically. In *Week-End*, there is a long and dreary passage in which two dust-bin men unburden themselves of some complacent, platitudinous remarks about society, as if they were a couple of noble savages. In *One plus One*, the Negroes are scarcely less self-righteous and anti-pathetic as they blather away—for some unknown reason, in a car-dump—while massacring white girls. Mme Godard is interviewed interminably about the modern world in an English wood, and answers a lot of random rot, for which her husband is no doubt responsible. In fact, the only tolerable section of *One plus One* is the documentary about a Rolling Stones recording session, with Mick Jagger repeatedly caterwauling an invocation to the Devil in the nocturnal gloom of a vast studio. This has a sort of decadent beauty, because the devil-worship is not without a grain of truth. But are the Rolling Stones a good thing, or a symbol of the cultural perversions of the consumer society? The film dwells on them with love, but how can one be both a Maoist and an admirer of the Rolling Stones? It is not simply that they have gathered a lot of capitalist moss; their

anarchistic anti-conventionalism, operating within a commercial framework, is the very antithesis of revolutionary puritanism.

**M**ORE PUZZLING STILL than the incoherence is the fact that Godard has tended increasingly to replace images by words, while at the same time making the words more or less nonsensical. The *camera-stylo*, as first used by the New Wave, was supposed to offer an escape from the limitations of verbalism and, as I have said, in his early films Godard had a gift for catching inconsequential detail by visual means. However, monologues, readings aloud, interviews and desultory conversation have progressively invaded his recent films until, in this latest one, *Le Gai Savoir*, the sound-track takes over as the dominant element and sputters away unceasingly, even when the screen is blank. It has even been published as a book by the revolutionary *Union des Ecrivains*, on the ground that it offers a critique of language as used in Western society. I have the book in front of me at this moment, since the director of the ICA obligingly gave me a copy, and not a glimmer of a critique can I see in it. The film can hardly be a practical joke, so Godard must have imagined that, by putting Jean-Pierre Léaud and Juliet Bertho together in a studio and letting them talk *à bâtons rompus* about modern life, while illustrating their chatter with news-reel film and advertising stills, he would help to "demystify" language and do the job of revolutionary analysis that conventional education fails to do.

Such pretentiousness is quite breath-taking. His two speakers ramble on for ninety minutes, on a level which suggests that the *Reader's Digest* would be above their powers of concentration, although they have picked up some Parisian catch-phrases. "Chance is structured like the unconscious," says Mlle Bertho, a Left-wing Marie Chantal, vaguely parroting Lacan's dictum about the unconscious being structured like a language. I don't understand how Godard can bear even to record such nonsense. This is not a demystification; it is a barbarous re-mystification.

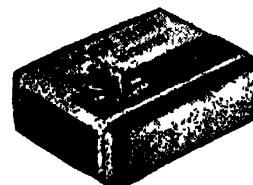
In short, in spite of what he says, Godard has not evolved into intelligent commitment. He has just exchanged his romantic admiration of the outlaw for a muddled and uninteresting obsession with the concept of revolution, which he is handling about as badly as possible. He appears to have renounced the things he was gifted for and to be trying to do something for which he has no talent, and in a way that is not even suited to his medium.



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## NOTES & TOPICS

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# The Fallacy of Daemoniac Enmity

WE CANNOT profit from our past errors unless we are candid in writing our history. The Russians, who are generally given an invented history to serve the purposes of their rulers, could hardly have begun to learn from their own errors until Chairman Khrushchev's extraordinary outburst of candour at the 20th Party Congress in 1956, surely the most hopeful single event in the entire history of the Soviet Union. This observation is preliminary to a comment on Mr. David Astor's profoundly moving account [in the *JUNE ENCOUNTER*] of the British and American refusal to have anything to do with those Germans who were trying to overthrow Hitler. My comment is simply an extrapolation of his own comment.

In the world as it has been since the French Revolution, a prime problem in the conduct of war and the making of peace has been the identification of the Enemy. Before the Revolution, when wars were made by princes using small professional armies, the Enemy was properly identified as an individual sovereign: it might be Louis XIV or Frederick the Great. However, with the post-revolutionary acceptance of the theory that sovereignty resides in a corporate person called "the People," and with the participation in war of whole nations in arms, it was inevitable that the identification of the Enemy should come to embrace nations in their entirety; so that, when the Enemy was defeated, every individual in the enemy population could be considered as sharing in a collective guilt and as subject to condign punishment.

The victors of 1815, because their minds had been formed in pre-Revolutionary days, identified Napoleon rather than the French people as the guilty enemy. Then, having packed him off to his island imprisonment, they were able to make a true and lasting peace with a France under the rule of his Bourbon successor. If, instead, they had identified the French people as the enemy, they would have been confronted by the impossibility of packing the whole of it off to St. Helena and then finding an alternative sovereign with whom to make peace. Neither

would they have felt themselves altogether free to cooperate with Talleyrand and other Frenchmen in the overthrow of Napoleon, for such collaborators would have been enemies simply in consequence of being French.

Post-revolutionary statemanship has occasionally struggled against the nefarious doctrine of collective guilt and the consequent identification of whole populations as enemies. However, when an entire nation is called on by its leaders to take up arms, and when victory becomes the irreducible objective, then the spectre of an opposed nation of menacing monsters must be evoked to make it accept the sacrifices that are the price of victory. In the American Civil War, Northerners and Southerners had to be aroused to mutual hatred if they were to fight with the necessary fanaticism. Such hatred, however, was bound to obviate the possibility of making a true peace when it had at last served its purpose in procuring victory, which is to say that it was bound to prevent a peace of reconciliation. As victory approached for the North, Lincoln undertook (in the memorable eloquence of his Second Inaugural Address) to lift the victorious people of the North above their war-time hatred. But it was no use. The victory, rather than leading to a peace of reconciliation, was followed by the ugly spectacle of the Reconstruction, which aroused in Southern hearts a bitterness that still today is not quite dead.

AN EFFORT SIMILAR to Lincoln's was made by Woodrow Wilson in World War I. Calling for an American declaration of war on the German state, he explicitly confined the identification of the enemy to the Kaiser's autocratic régime. "We have no quarrel with the German people," he said, adding that the United States would be fighting "for the ultimate peace of the world and for the liberation of its peoples, the German peoples included." Again, however, it was no use. Although the Kaiser's régime was overthrown before the War's end, the Allied peoples had been aroused by the propaganda of wartime to indiscriminate hatred of the German people as a whole. Because the enemy, for them, was the entire German nation, no true peace could be made when the enemy identified by Wilson was gone. The democratic régime of the new Weimar Republic, representing the "liberated" German people, was constrained by the victors to plead guilty in the name of the German nation itself. On the basis of this imposed verdict of national guilt, it then felt itself compelled to accept a punitive settlement. So no true peace was made. The Weimar régime, unable to survive the psychological and material burdens



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imposed on it by the avenging victors, was at last succeeded by Hitler and his Nazis. (It should be noted, however, that in the *Reichstag* elections of 1933, which brought them to power, 56.1% of the votes were cast against them.) I see no fundamental difference between Hitler's doctrine of collective guilt applied to all the Jews, down to infants in arms, and the same doctrine applied to all the Germans.

In World War II, the unsuccessful statesmanship of Lincoln and Wilson was not repeated. President Roosevelt, especially, was unequivocal in his identification of the Enemy as the three Axis peoples, rather than as their governing régimes only, asserting that they were "aggressor peoples" by their very nature, as rattlesnakes are poisonous, in contrast to the "peace-loving peoples": i.e., those of the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, and China. "It is clear to us," he told Congress, "that if Germany and Italy and Japan—or any one of them—remain armed at the end of this war or are permitted to re-arm, they will again, and inevitably, embark upon an ambitious career of world conquest." (When may we expect Italy, which has been re-armed for a generation now, to begin?) The governing régime, in this conception, was at most secondary.

One may doubt that this conception was congenial to Churchill, but it fitted perfectly the common mind of the day in America and Britain alike. David Astor notes that "the anti-German racism preached by Lord Vansittart went almost unchallenged in our public life." In 1941 there appeared in London a book, *The Behaviour of Nations* by Morley Roberts, in which Mr. Roberts advanced Roosevelt's conception of national guilt as a justification for genocide. European chancelleries, he wrote, "know that the Germans' leader became their leader because he is so essentially what they are." He drew the conclusion that, "if the German people are again overcome, it must be held that the massacre of a whole population is justifiable if no other means can secure an inoffensive nation or nationality." Given the premise, his logic was impeccable.

IT IS IN THE CONCEPTION of the German, Italian, and Japanese peoples as aggressors by their in-born nature, advanced by Roosevelt as the basis on which the Atlantic allies would deal with them after their defeat, that we must find the reason for the moralistic refusal of the American and British governments to cooperate with the German opposition. If all Germans shared alike in the evil that Hitler merely enacted as their representative, then it would have been improper to have dealings with any of them,

whether Adam von Trott, Gerhard von Schwerin, Konrad Adenauer, or Goethe himself if he had been alive. And even if it would not have been improper, how could the German opposition to Hitler have been given the assurances it had to have if it was to succeed in overthrowing him? How could it have been given assurances that a Germany under an Adenauer régime, say, would be treated any more considerately than the Germany under Hitler's rule? There was no such intention. Roosevelt, himself, had made that clear.

The whole conceptual basis on which the Atlantic Allies fought the War was false—morally false in its racism and pragmatically false in obviating the possibility of making a real peace, at the end of the War, with a successor régime. It required the replacement of German power by that power-vacuum into which Stalin's Red Army was inevitably drawn as the War came to its close, thereby setting the stage for the Cold War that followed.

Von Trott (and how many millions of others?) was the victim of the fallacy of the two species: the mythic belief, which has taken so many forms in history, that humanity is divided between a virtuous species (ourselves and those with whom we identify ourselves) and a vicious species (those who belong to another race or cultural community).

Such hope as we may reasonably hold for the long future of mankind would appear to depend on our achieving the intellectual and moral sophistication that will enable us to recognise the basic fact of our common humanity, the fact that opposed groupings of mankind, however else they may be distinguished, are not inherently distinguished by the distinction between good and evil.

This, to me, is the ultimate lesson implicit in Mr. Astor's account of a lamentable history. It is elementary. It was understood by Gibbon two centuries ago when, referring to the conflict between the Athanasians and the Arians, he wrote:

The fierce and partial writers of the times, ascribing all virtues to themselves, and imputing all guilt to their adversaries, have painted the battle of the angels and daemons. Our calmer reason will reject such pure and perfect monsters of vice and sanctity, and will impute an equal, or at least an indiscriminate, measure of good and evil to the hostile sectaries. . . .

Let us hope that the calmer reason and the candour of future historians will at last drive home the lesson.

Louis J. Halle

# Of Barricades & Ivory Towers

## *An Interview with T. W. Adorno*

**H**ERR PROFESSOR, a fortnight ago the world still seemed to be in order. . . .

ADORNO: Not to me.

—You said that your relations with your students were unimpaired and that in the learned institutions in which you teach fruitful and objective discussions were continuing undisturbed. But now you have called off your lectures.

ADORNO: Not for the whole term, but only until further notice; I intend to resume them in a few weeks. That is what all my colleagues do when their lectures are subjected to such disruption.

—Was violence used against you?

ADORNO: Not physical violence, but there was such an uproar that the lecture would have been totally submerged. That was obviously the intention.

—Students used to treat you with great respect. Do you object only to the form taken by their opposition to you, or to their political aims also? You and the students used to see eye to eye.

ADORNO: That is not the dimension in which our differences come into play. I recently said in a television interview that I had set up a theoretical model, but I could not suspect that people would want to put it into practice with

Molotov cocktails. That sentence of mine has been quoted an innumerable number of times, but it is very much in need of interpretation.

—How would you interpret it today?

ADORNO: In my writings I have never set up any kind of model for practical action. I am a man of theory, and feel theoretical thought to be extremely close to the purposes of the artist. It is not just since yesterday that I have turned away from practical action; my thinking has always had a very indirect relationship to practice. It may have had practical effects inasmuch as a number of ideas may have entered the general consciousness, but I have never said anything directly aimed at practical action. Since the first rumpus against me in Berlin in 1967 certain groups of students have kept trying to force solidarity on me and demanding practical action from me. That I have consistently refused.

—But critical theory cannot be content to leave things as they are. The SDS students learnt that from you. But you now refuse them practical action, Herr Professor. So do you just cultivate a "critical liturgy," as Ralf Dahrendorf has remarked?

ADORNO: In Dahrendorf there is a tone of care-free conviction that, if only small reforms were made, then perhaps everything would be better. That is an assumption I cannot accept. In the APO movement [the so-called Extra-Parliamentary Opposition] I am always confronted by pressure to commit myself to join in, and that is something that since my earliest youth I have refused to do. In that respect there has been no change in me. I try to express my ideas, but I cannot regulate them by the use that may be made of them or the consequences.

—Intellectual in an ivory tower, then?

ADORNO: I am not in the least afraid of the term "ivory tower" [*Elfenbeinturm*]. It had its better days, when Baudelaire used it. But, since you have mentioned it, I think a theory is much more likely to have a practical effect thanks to its objectivity than if it is subjected to practice in advance. The unfortunate thing about the relationship between theory and practice today is that theory is subjected to a practical pre-censorship. For instance, they want to prevent

HISTORY has certain standard political ironies—such as the revolution devouring its own children or, in other ravenous moments, its own parents. Professor T. W. ADORNO was one of the fathers of the German student rebellion. His seminars in Marxist dialectical philosophy at the University of Frankfurt's "Institut für Sozialforschung" (Herbert Marcuse once taught there) produced most of the leading student revolutionaries who have been organising the strikes and street-battles of the last several years. Then, dramatically, there was a falling-out of comrades. Theory seemed to conflict with practice, words failed to match deeds. A generational gap began to divide even the forces on the New Left. Adorno came under severe attack, his Institute was occupied, and his lectures disrupted. In the following interview, one of the editors of "Der Spiegel" questions Professor Adorno about the background of his so-called retreat from the barricades to an ivory tower.

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me from saying simple things that show the illusory nature of many of the political aims of certain students.

—But those students obviously have a big following.

ADORNO: Small groups continually succeed in high-pressuring a spirit of loyalty which the great majority of Left-wing students are unable to resist. But I should like to repeat that in so doing they cannot appeal to any models for action that I have given them in order later to detach me from them. No such models exist.

—Nevertheless it is a fact that students sometimes very directly and sometimes indirectly appeal to your critique of society. Without your theories the German student protest movement might perhaps not have arisen.

ADORNO: That I would not deny; all the same, I find it hard to see the connection. I should be prepared to believe that the critique of the manipulation of public opinion—which I hold to be completely legitimate, even if it takes the form of demonstration—would not have been possible without the chapter on "Kulturindustrie" in the *Dialectics of Enlightenment* by Max Horkheimer and myself. But I think that the connection between theory and practice is often short-circuited. When one has taught and published with the intensity that I have for twenty years, it passes into the general consciousness.

—And thus also into practice?

ADORNO: In certain circumstances, but not necessarily. In our works the value of so-called individual actions is greatly limited by the emphasis on the social totality.

—But how can the social totality be changed without individual actions?

ADORNO: Now you are asking too much of me. Generally, I can really only answer the question: What should be done? by saying: I do not know. I can only try remorselessly to analyse things as they are. It is then objected that, if I practise criticism, I am obliged also to say how things should be done better. And that I regard as a bourgeois prejudice. It has occurred a countless number of times in history that works written with purely theoretical intentions have brought about changes in the general consciousness and thus also in social reality.

—But in your works you have distinguished your "critical theory" from theories of other kinds. Your critical theory claims not just to be an empirical description of reality but to include consideration of the proper organisation of society.

ADORNO: On that occasion I was engaged in criticising positivism. Note that I said *consider-*

*ation*. The sentence does not imply that I have the presumption to say how one should act.

—But you once said that the critical theory would "lift the stones under which the vermin breed." If students now pick up those stones and begin throwing them—is that so ununderstandable?

ADORNO: It is certainly not ununderstandable. I think their zeal for action is attributable to desperation, because people feel how little power they really have to change society. But I also think these individual actions are doomed to failure; that was shown by the May revolts in France.

—But if individual actions are useless, is not all that is left the "critical impotence" for which the SDS attacked you?

ADORNO: There is a phrase of Grabbe's that says: "For nothing but desperation can save us (Denn nichts als nur Verzweiflung kann uns retten). . . ." It is provocative, but by no means foolish. I do not regard it as a criticism that one should be desperate, or pessimistic, or negative, in the world in which we live. But it becomes a real limitation when people try to shout down their objective desperation by the hurrah-optimism of direct action in order to make things psychologically easier.

—Your colleague, Jürgen Habermas, another champion of "Kritische Theorie," has now admitted in an article that the students have developed a cult of "fantastical provocation" and are really able to bring about some changes.

ADORNO: I would agree with that. I believe that, but for the students, our university reform

## — The Academic Life —

Frankfurt

THEODOR W. ADORNO, 65, till recently philosopher of the Student Left ("How could I know that people would try to translate my theories into action by means of Molotov Cocktails? . . .") was prevented last week from holding his usual lecture on "Introduction to Dialectics." The interruption in Horsaal VII of Frankfurt University was due to a campaign of "planned tenderness." After the distribution of a leaflet entitled "ADORNO ALS INSTITUTION IST TOT," three young revolutionary females from the "Basisgruppe Soziologie" circled around Professor Adorno, at first waving their bouquets of flowers, then kissing him, exposing their breasts, and confronting him with erotic pantomime. Professor Adorno, who had called in the police last semester when 76 student radicals occupied his Institute for Social Research, tried to protect himself with his briefcase, and then left the lecture hall. He has since announced that his lectures and seminar on "Dialectics" would be indefinitely postponed.

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—incidentally we do not know yet what the outcome will be—would not have been instituted at all. I believe that, but for the student movement, the general attention that is now paid to the processes of stupefaction (*Verdummungsprozess*) that prevail in present-day society would never have crystallised. And—to mention something quite concrete—I also think that it was only as a result of the Berlin students' investigation of the murder of Ohnesorg that the whole dreadful story penetrated to the public consciousness. By this I mean to say that I by no means cut myself off from drawing practical conclusions when I can see that they are correct.

—And when have you regarded them as correct?

ADORNO: I have taken part in demonstrations against the national Emergency Laws, and I have done what I could in the field of criminal law reform. But there is a total difference between that sort of thing and involving myself in half-crazy affairs such as throwing stones at the windows of university institutes.

—What is your criterion whether an action is sensible or not?

ADORNO: For one thing, it depends to a large extent on the concrete situation. For another, I have the greatest reservations about the use of violence. If I did not reject the vicious circle of meeting force with force I should have to deny my whole past—the Hitler experience and what I have observed of Stalinism. I can visualise sensible practical action to bring about change only as not involving the use of violence.

—Even under a Fascist dictatorship?

ADORNO: There are situations in which things are different. A real Fascist system can be met only with force. In that respect I am anything but rigid. But, after the murder of countless millions in the totalitarian states, I refuse to follow those who still preach violence. That is the dividing line.

—Was that dividing line crossed when students tried to prevent the delivery of Springer newspapers by sit-down strikes?

ADORNO: I regard that sit-down strike as legitimate.

—Was it crossed when students disrupted your lecture by noisy sex scenes?

ADORNO: I have always opposed all kinds of sex repression and taboos—and they did that for my benefit, of all people! Ridiculing me, and setting three hippy girls at me! I found them disgusting. The comic effect aimed at was basic-

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ally the reaction of the philistine *Spiessbürger* who giggles at the sight of a girl with bare breasts. The whole absurdity was of course calculated in advance.

—*Was this unusual performance intended to upset your theories?*

ADORNO: I do not think these actions against me are really directed at the content of my lectures. The extreme Left is more concerned with publicity. It is afraid of being forgotten, so it becomes the slave of its own publicity. Lectures like mine, which are attended by about 1,000 people, obviously provide a splendid forum for activist propaganda.

—*But cannot the students' action also be interpreted as an act of desperation? May they not have felt let down by a Theory which they believed at least was capable of being transformed into action that would change society?*

ADORNO: They have not tried discussing it with me. What makes dealing with them so difficult today is the predominance of tactics. My friends and I have the feeling that we are now merely objects in carefully calculated plans. The idea of the right of minorities, which is after all an essential element in liberty, no longer plays any role. They blind themselves to reality in the matter.

—*And what about your adopting a defence strategy in the face of all this?*

ADORNO: My interests are increasingly directed to philosophical speculation. If I were to give practical advice, as Herbert Marcuse has done to a certain extent, my productivity would decline. A great deal can be said against the division of labour, but even Marx, who in his youth violently attacked it, later recognised of course that it was a necessity.

—*Thus, you have decided for theory and leave practice to others; in fact they are already engaged in it. Would it not be better if theory simultaneously reflected practice? And also included present actions?*

ADORNO: There are situations in which I might do that. At present it seems to me to be much more important to consider the anatomy of activism.

—*So mere theory again?*

ADORNO: At this time I attach greater importance to theory. I tackled these questions long ago—particularly in my work on *Negative Dialectics*—before the present conflict arose.

—*"Negative Dialectics" contains the following resigned statement: "Philosophy, which once seemed outdated, remains alive because the time*

*for its realisation was missed." Does not such a philosophy—beyond all conflicts—become mere "foolishness"? That is a question you posed yourself.*

ADORNO: As before, I believe that it is precisely under the pressure of the universal activism of a functionally pragmatized world that theory should be clung to. Recent events have done nothing to make me wish to change anything I have written.

—*Your friend Habermas once stated that your dialectics have so far restricted themselves to the "blackest spots" of resignation, the "destructive suction of the death wish."*

ADORNO: I should say rather that the frantic trend to positivism derives from the death wish.

—*So the virtue of philosophy is to look the negative in the face but not to change it?*

ADORNO: Philosophy in so far as it remains philosophy cannot recommend direct steps or changes. It brings about changes in so far as it remains theory. I think that for once the question might well be asked whether it is not a form of opposition for a man to think and write the things that I write. Is not theory also a genuine form of practice?

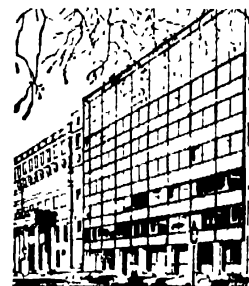
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*—Are there not situations (as in Greece, for instance) in which, apart from critical reflection, you would favour action?*

ADORNO: In Greece I should obviously approve of any kind of action. A totally different situation prevails there. But telling other people to go out and make a revolution when you are living in security is so absurd as to be embarrassing.

*—So, as before, you regard analysing social conditions as the most sensible and useful work that you can do?*

ADORNO: Yes, and also to devote myself to quite specific individual phenomena. I am not in the least ashamed to say quite frankly and openly that I am working on a big book on aesthetics.

*London Commentary*

## The Boredom & the Excitement

*On Reforming Local Government — By John P. Mackintosh, M.P.*



THERE IS A REAL danger that the reform of local government, which is important and could be exciting, will collapse, borne down by active opponents among the minority who understand the new Redcliffe-Maud proposals and the boredom of the majority who do not.

Those who cannot raise a flicker of interest are probably recoiling from memories of old Fabian tracts, of tedious books on by-laws and of the less than dynamic local councillors they have met. But there is a new range of issues which deserve some consideration. Local government should be able to handle a problem which does interest many people nowadays—the preservation and improvement of the environment in which we live.

Are we in our villages, suburbs, or city centres to have our cardrums ruptured by low-flying jets landing nearby? Is the river at the foot of the garden to be so polluted that it is unsafe to put a big toe in it? Will it be possible to drive into the theatre without endless delays and alarms, and will there be a theatre there anyway? With greater wealth and leisure now taken for granted, the quality of life has begun to matter much more and this has happened at a time when our capacity for ruining our environment has likewise become much greater.

A second point is that the sort of planning involved and the task in each area of finding a balance between public and private interest cannot all be handled from London. It has to be arranged and re-arranged in each locality according to the views of the people on the spot. In addition, many consider that Britain is already too centralised: but whether this is accepted or

not, it is physically impossible to leave to Whitehall all decisions about the purposes for which land is to be used, the kind of building to be permitted, etc. This was demonstrated when the queue of planning appeals had built up to 12,000 and the waiting period to several years. Not only has this work to be done in localities but also it requires imagination as well as detailed knowledge. This kind of local government is far more absorbing than the prospect, as Churchill once put it, of “joining Beatrice Webb in her soup kitchen.”

It is past time local government in Britain was reformed so that it will attract those who would like to tackle these problems. In other countries where local authorities have real powers to make a difference to people's lives, politicians as vigorous and controversial as Rockefeller and Lindsay, Adenauer and Brandt all began their political careers in local government. And it would be useful in Britain to have another training ground for leadership and reservoir of political talent besides the House of Commons where a decade out of office reduces the level of experience and number of able men available on the Opposition front benches.

WITH THESE ADVANTAGES in a lively local government, it might be wondered why anyone is opposed to reform. But the hostile combination is powerful. As one civic dignitary put it, “Mayors of England unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains. . . .” And these mayors, aldermen, and councillors often hold key posts in the constituency organisations which choose and then pursue the local M.P. It is only to be expected that council officials and the many employees of local government fear amalgamations and possible redundancies. Some citizens, particularly in the smaller boroughs, still feel a real civic pride and resent losing their present degree of self-government. Finally, there is the

tremendous distaste among all sorts in London, civil servants, M.P.s, and journalists alike, for any notion that a measure of authority could be conceded to the provinces and that originality and ability might flourish in organisations outside their immediate control.

FACING ALL THESE opponents, the recent Redcliffe-Maud Commission had a further set of handicaps imposed by the Government in its terms of reference. The Commission was not allowed to look at Wales, Scotland, or London, nor was it permitted to decide what should be the proper field for local government. It was restricted to considering how best to reorganise the *existing* functions of the *present* councils in England. The oddity of this decision only appears when one recalls that in the past 20 years many important tasks have been taken away from local government just because it was not reformed. So it might have been thought proper at least to allow the Commission to include the possibility of resuming these duties if a suitable scale of organisation could be created.

Important examples are the hospitals (whose location and management excite great local interest), preservation of the countryside, internal airports, and river pollution. There are other functions (particularly, regional economic and land-use planning) which Whitehall has handed out to the regions but not to local government and which were therefore also outside the Commission's terms of reference. So were the operations of those nationalised industries which are managed on a regional basis.

Despite these limitations, the Royal Commission proceeded in a systematic manner. Wanting a new system which would be efficient, democratic, long-lasting and likely to produce active participation, the members decided in favour of "efficiency" as the key factor if there should be any discrepancies between these objectives. Although the research carried out for the Commission established that bigger units do not always provide better services, a minimum and maximum population level for efficient operation was arrived at. Without much evidence to support such precise figures, the Commission decided that many services would not work well if there were fewer than 250,000 people in the unit and that the whole thing would cease to be "local" if there were more than one million.

Then, facing the question of whether there should be two levels of local government—one for the large-scale services such as planning, major roads, water supply, and the redevelopment of cities, and another for the more intimate personal services in health, social work, and amenities—the Commission decided that these functions were linked (especially in the form of

housing needs); and so they plumped for 58 all-purpose councils unattractively named as "unitary authorities." Looking at the often large and artificial units that resulted, they felt it necessary to add smaller local councils for advisory purposes and much larger councils to cover what they call "provinces" (*viz.*, the South-West, East Anglia, the North-East).

THE TROUBLE WITH THIS SOLUTION is that it teems with difficulties and attracts little positive support. At present there is some local pride in the moderate-sized boroughs and those involved in their government will bitterly resent being left with merely advisory bodies. At the higher or provincial level, there is an air of impermanence about the whole thing because the Crowther Commission may well give some of the tasks of the nominated regional Boards and some of the duties absorbed by the central government to the provincial councils. Then these bodies might also take over the running of the Police since the Redcliffe-Maud Commission admitted that this could not be left to the 58 unitary authorities.

If these executive powers were given to the provinces they will become much more important and attractive authorities and may have to be directly elected. The result, in my view, would produce a far more satisfactory series of units for running the major services than Redcliffe-Maud's 58 unitary authorities. One can imagine the scope given to men such as Dan Smith if they had the whole of the North-East to administer. The South-West likewise has some collective sentiment and patriotism (though to make the most of this, the provincial boundary should run through Somerset and Dorset excluding Bath, Bristol, and Bournemouth).

To move in this direction would require a much more genuine discussion of "devolution" than the Commission attempted. Is it true and, if so, is it desirable to create centres outside London with a real political life of their own and scope for varying administrative methods and policies? Can we envisage a Prime Minister of the West Midlands making a name for himself and becoming a more important national figure than a junior Cabinet Minister?

It is because the Redcliffe-Maud Commission was not empowered to face these questions—because its proposals break away from the known, valued focuses of loyalty without moving towards units which look like in time producing at least the same level of interest and loyalty—that there has been such a confused and muted public response. The Commission has broken the log-jam on local government reform without, alas, creating stable platforms for new constructions.

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# BOOKS & WRITERS

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## On Translating Balzac

By Rayner Heppenstall

I AM SLOWLY approaching the end of a translation of Balzac's longest novel but one. My deadline is still seven months away. I have been at it the best part of a year-and-a-half, and I am three-quarters of the way through, though not in a straight line. The book is divided into four parts. I did the first and longest part first; then I did the fourth part, largely because it presented the most obvious difficulties; and I have just finished the second part and started on the third.

Naturally, I hope to anticipate my deadline, if only by a few weeks. Even so, the translation will have taken me most of two years. I dare say I could have done it in less had I been willing to suspend all other literary activities. I work on the typewriter straight into a final copy with two carbons, not often reading over what I have done but leaving it to my wife to detect repetitions, omissions, confusion, inconsistency and gross infelicity, which I then correct by hand on all three copies. In terms of time spent on the job, I calculate that my earnings by the hour are roughly those of a charwoman or one of the less union-protected and more conscientious varieties of unskilled labourer.

The novel has been translated before, but I have not looked at the earlier translations. This was not a matter of principle or, at any rate, of strong principle. If there had been an earlier translation in the house, I should have studied it. On the other hand, I have resisted the temptation to borrow someone else's copy of the Saintsbury translation. It will be more fun to look at other translations when I have finished mine, perhaps not until mine is in print.

I have, indeed, sometimes thought that to revise an existing translation might be more sensible than to make a new one. The ideal would, I suppose, have been to work over a good British or American translation done round about 1850, all necessary additions being made in a flawless *pastiche* of novelists' English of the time—of Charles Kingsley, say, or Charles Reade or Wilkie Collins, or the Bulwer-

Lytton of *Paul Clifford*. For, while it may rightly be argued that Homer or Virgil or Dante needs translating afresh for each generation, this is not the case with 19th- or, for that matter, 18th-century novels in a fully developed European language. Of earlier translations of these, the period flavour is desirable, not the reverse (as it is with stuff as remote from earlier translators as from ourselves, a question not purely of historical time or geographical distance). The very first translations of Balzac should need modifying only in so far as they are bad translations, bad as translations from his French or, in English, stylistically poor according to the standards of their own day, done from a bad text or defective for reasons to do with moral or political hypocrisy.

However, to revise an early translation or to collate several early translations is not what I contracted to do. Even less did I contract to rewrite the book as I myself might have done it, an amusing exercise for a novelist (the result would have been shorter). I aim at a perfectly straightforward fidelity to the original, accepting even Balzac's dreadful system of punctuation, accepting the endless "he said," "he continued," "she replied," and the rest. "Agony" would hardly be too strong a word for some of the masochistic feats involved in the maintenance of such fidelity, for Balzac's use of *dit*, *fit*, *reprit*, *continua*, *répondit*, is not merely automatic, it is sometimes grotesque, in that a character will frequently "go on" who has not begun, or reply to a question which has not been put even by implication. Balzac's use of language is not only commonplace and frequently careless, it is sometimes quite hideously inept, now and then perfectly meaningless, one of the ways in which he compares very unfavourably with Victor Hugo as a novelist.

THESE ARE GENERAL difficulties with Balzac. There are difficulties specific to the novel I am translating, and the reader may be interested

in these. The novel is *Splendeurs et Misères des Courtisanes*. Its action follows on directly from that of *Illusions Perdues*, towards the end of which the fatally handsome young poet, Lucien Chardon, *dit de Rubempré* (a style to which he has some claim on his mother's side), returned disastrously from Paris to the neighbourhood of Angoulême and setting out one morning to drown himself in the Charente, is picked up by a mysterious Spanish priest on a diplomatic mission, who promises him a glorious future, takes him into his carriage and drives on towards Paris. This priest, it will duly turn out, is really the M. Vautrin at the boarding-house in *Le Père Goriot*, revealed (during the course of that best-known of all Balzac's novels) to be an ex-convict, Jacques Collin, known as Dodgedeath.

Balzac's intention had been to write a novel about prostitution. His title for this was to be *La Torpille*, the professional nickname of the heroine, Esther Gobseck, daughter of an unknown father and Sara van Gobseck, herself a prostitute known as *la belle Hollandaise*, great-niece of the financier Gobseck. (These figures occur in other novels and stories, Esther's mother being murdered in *César Birotteau*.) *La Torpille* as projected was in fact written, and most of it was published, some under that title, some under the title *Esther, ou les Amours d'un Banquier*. Projected in 1837, partly written the following year and completed in 1843, it thereafter appeared as parts one and two of *Splendeurs et Misères des Courtisanes*, completed as a whole in early 1847 and published towards the end of that year. After the death of Esther, the novel is not much concerned with prostitution, and so the over-all title is something of a misnomer. It is, however, fully applicable to parts one and two.

A LARGE DIFFICULTY ARISES very early with regard to the classification of the types of harlotry, though in fact this difficulty soon turns out to be easily dealt with in the remoter

<sup>1</sup> As readers of Sterne know, the word *grisette* (or *grisset*, as Sterne writes it) had once been innocent of all meretricious implication. This seems to indicate happier economic circumstances for women under the *ancien régime*. For these little seamstresses were simply unprotected working-class girls in the big city. In London during the present century, their equivalent was the "shopgirls" who were "picked up" by undergraduates and other rich young riff-raff in novels of the 1920s and early '30s and who are still so picked up in the work of that curiously old-fashioned writer, Mr. Anthony Powell.

<sup>2</sup> Félicien Marceau, *Balzac and His World* (tr. Derek Coltman, 1967).

fields of pornotypology. It was the simplest and commonest word of all, *fille*, which gave me most trouble in the first half of the book. We have no word which may equally mean a common prostitute, a serving woman (or, indeed, any young woman of the working class), in certain contexts a nun, and in all contexts a daughter of even the most respectable or noble family. It is with a highly generalised category, *les filles*, that Balzac's sociology and psychology are mostly concerned. His generalisations, that is to say, are almost invariably about what *les filles* think, feel and do, not about the more circumscribed thoughts, emotions and actions of *courtisanes*, *lorettes*, *filles soumises*, juvenile *rats* or mere *grisettes*,<sup>1</sup> essentially part-timers. (The Proustian *cocotte* has not yet appeared.) I fear that at times I have been reduced to the word "wench" when the pornic implication was tenuous.

Here, I may be allowed a critical point, which has nothing to do with translation difficulties except in so far as the difficult word is involved. The cruellest deed ever performed by Vautrin, in any of the works in which he occurs (they include a play simply called *Vautrin*), was, I suggest, implanted in Balzac's mind by the simple linguistic fact that a *fille* was also a daughter and that nothing renders a man so vulnerable as a cherished daughter who may be turned overnight into a *fille publique* in the sight of a vicious world which yet demands total "purity" of young women (not but that even now rape at tender years may not have the most devastating psychological effects on a girl). The return of Peyrade's beloved Adela from the brothel to which she has been lured is "little Nell" stuff with a vengeance (it is literally a vengeance). Dickens himself would hardly have attempted it. Richardson might, but, if he had, it would not have been the language in which he wrote which itself put the notion into his mind.

With Esther's nickname the difficulty is perfectly specific. The English translator of Félicien Marceau's recent book on Balzac<sup>2</sup> has, I see, finked it and let the name stand in French as *la Torpille*. I have been bolder. I have allowed Esther to be referred to as "the Torpedo," fully aware that this lends her associations we might nowadays find attached to an aggressive Hollywood "blonde bombshell," Esther being neither blonde nor a bombshell. The word *torpille* is French for a numb-fish, cramp-fish or electric ray (not to be confused with the sting ray). "Torpedo" was the Latin word for this fish. When moored or floating mines were first devised as an instrument of naval warfare, we and the French both named them after it (you touched them and got a shock). The French and

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ourselves now both reserve the designation *torpille* or "torpedo" to the later, self-propelled weapon originally called a *torpille locomotrice* or "locomotive torpedo." Neither we nor the French now think of a moored or floating mine as a torpedo. The word *torpille* may, it is true, still be used in French for a numb-fish, cramp-fish or electric ray, but the fact seems to be unknown to most Frenchmen, except perhaps on the Mediterranean. I have certainly found it to be unknown to a university-educated Breton. The fish itself is, I dare say, less common in our waters.

A BOTHER WHICH CROPS UP in part one, and which largely (to the mind of the unfortunate translator) dominates part two and is shared with *La Maison Nucingen* and *César Birotteau*, is the dialogue given to Baron Nucingen, the banker. He is commonly said to be an Alsatian, though his way of speaking is also described as that of a Polish Jew. Balzac prints all his lines in italics, and he distorts what the love-sick old scoundrel says to the point of near-unintelligibility in a perfectly systematic fashion, always changing certain vowels and, in the case of consonants, at all points substituting a voiced for an unvoiced, an unvoiced for a voiced, consonant, a *p* for a *b* but also a *b* for a *p*, a *t* for a *d* but also a *d* for a *t*, a *k* for a hard *g* and *vice versa*, *ch* for *j*, *j* for *ch* and so on. I have been less systematic. In the result, I fancy that what Nucingen says will be in general a bit less immediately unintelligible, though not much. Whenever I saw dialogue in italics coming up, I groaned and was tempted to give up. I have not felt justified in too much pre-alleviating the reader's inevitable groans. To be largely unintelligible is an essential part of the baron's character, the height of absurdity being that he thinks and soliloquises in his frightful jargon and uses it in conversation with those with whom, in any imaginable real life, he would certainly speak good German or Yiddish. In French or in English, it is bound to be a relief to the reader when he finally disappears. This relief was recently experienced by the translator, who felt that Esther's suicide was more adequately motivated than some critics have thought it.

THE NEW DIFFICULTY in part three is provided by radical differences between the French and English legal systems. Against this difficulty I had, as it happens, been somewhat forearmed by the study of French law in another connection, but I have only just discovered how grave the problem would be to me as a translator. If only through reading Simenon, most English readers are aware of the importance in French criminal

procedure of the *juge d'instruction*, commonly translated in English as "examining magistrate." I don't, I may say, quarrel with this translation. It seems to me to do perfectly well. The trouble is that there is no accepted and precisely meaningful English translation for any other characteristic figure in French law. Even "law" and *loi* are not equivalent terms. In most cases in which an English novelist (or journalist or publicist) speaks of "the Law," his French counterpart will be speaking of *la Justice*. The word "police" has different ranges of connotation in the two languages now, and these differences were not the same in the first half of the 19th century. In Balzac, *la police* commonly means the whole field of police work, sometimes what we should call police methods. It hardly ever means, as it does with us, a collectivity of policemen.

A whole book could be written on this one little group of linguistic points resulting from administrative differences. The relations between police and the military give rise to endless trouble. The organisation of the French magistracy is even worse. Everyone here may know that *gendarme* is an awkward word, but it is not so awkward as *magistrat*. Prosecuting counsel in any French criminal case is a member of the magistracy, and yet to us, although he wears a red gown, he, the *avocat-général*, is as much a barrister as the black-gowned *avocat*, which prevents us translating *avocat* as "barrister" when that would seem the natural thing to do. An important figure in parts three and four of *Splendeurs et Misères* is M. de Granville, the *Procureur-Général*. His position is not quite either that of our Attorney-General or of our Director of Public Prosecutions. In broadly "Anglo-Saxon" if not in specifically British terms, a *procureur du Roi* (or, at other times, *de la République*), may properly be called a district attorney, which is perhaps sufficient reason for deciding that M. de Granville shall be Attorney-General and that *le Parquet* shall be the Attorney-General's office. The word "procurator," still used in Scotland, doesn't much help. It was used in Judaea, too, and the best-known procurator in history seems to have been a sort of *Gauleiter*.

At a point near the beginning of part three, I have already (momentarily) quite thrown in the sponge. Balzac spends several pages explaining to the readers of his own time the difference between *l'inculpé*, *le prévenu*, *l'accusé* and *le détenu* as successive stages in the evolution of a suspected, charged, tried and possibly convicted man, together with his progressive confinement in *maisons d'arrêt*, *maisons de justice*, and *maisons de détention*. He explicitly recognises that his audience will contain not only

ignorant Parisians and French provincials but foreigners, and so there is some excuse for letting the words stand in French, though to decide that he will do this is enough to bring a sweat to the forehead of any conscientious translator. Having explained the words, it may be said, Balzac then largely abandons them in favour of others which he does not explain. In practice, this is something of a relief, though *la pistole* and *le bague* are not quite child's play. For *le secret*, "solitary confinement" will perhaps do, but then in part four the word *secret* begins to mean hidden loot.

THE READER MAY REMEMBER that I have already translated part four. This part is called "The Last Incarnation of Vautrin." After the suicide in prison of Lucien de Rubempré, Jacques Collin, the ex-convict disguised (it may be recalled) as a Spanish priest and at one time known as M. Vautrin, contrives to get himself appointed head of the Sûreté, as the real-life Vidocq had done long before the fictional date, which is 1830. During the course of this manoeuvre, he is turned out into the prison yard among men whom he had known at the *bague* in Toulon and who believe with reason that he has robbed them of funds in the outside world for which he was their trustee. The scenes in which he regains their confidence and re-establishes his ascendancy over them are conducted largely in underworld *argot*, upon which Balzac further expatiates in general terms for the benefit of his readers.

There has always been an English thieves' cant or slang. The English common reader meets it in Fielding, though some of it was already found among the Elizabethans, and some oddly survives as schoolgirl or Mayfair affectation, while some is also regarded as regional or of recent American origin. Disappointingly little of it gets into Dickens. Balzac himself was no real authority on the subject, which could be quickly read up from glossaries published in his time, notably that appended to one of the volumes of Vidocq apocrypha, *Les Voleurs*. We know that Balzac was personally acquainted with Vidocq, as also that he had helped to ghost the memoirs of the elder Sanson, the public executioner. Not all Balzac's forms can be traced to their sources, however, and some of them suggest that he had misunderstood what he had read and heard or that he presumed upon the ignorance of his readers.

The characteristic vocabulary contains both unusual words and familiar words used unusually. The best thing to do with familiar words in odd senses seemed to be to translate them literally. These old lags call a priest a *sanglier*, refer to the Attorney-General's office

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or the A.-G. himself as *la Cigogne* and call the scaffold, where many of them will be *fauchés* or *raccourcis*, *l'abbaye de Monte-à-Regret* or *de Monte-à-Rebours*. I can see no good reason why, astonished to see Dodgedeath got up as a wild boar, they should not tell him of their expectation that the Stork would send them to the Abbey of Mount Unwilling to be, say, sliced or topped rather than scythed or shortened. Not that word-for-word literalness is often to be commended. When, a few years ago, President de Gaulle spoke of *la paix des braves*, we got it as "the peace of brave men," for instance. Not a single London newspaper office hit on the fact that what he meant was burying the hatchet, the braves he had in mind being those to be met with in the works of James Fenimore Cooper.

WITH THE UNUSUAL WORDS a comparative linguist might spend many a happy hour. All that the translator needs to know is what they mean, and then he must find some equivalent in the slang of his own language, preferably slang of the period. It was disappointing to find so few international or, rather, interlingual phonemes. The only one, really, was "dab." In the very idea of mastery, the notions of cleverness and authority are blended. English "dab" (as in "dab hand") has tended towards the side of cleverness. The same word in French has veered towards authority. Acknowledged as *le Dab*, or even, with tears in the eyes, as *mon Dab*, Jacques Collin is boss among the swell mob, the *haute pègre*. But, indeed, in Vidocq, the word is glossed as *roi, reine*. I know of no English homophone or near-homophone even remotely equivalent to *largue* as a mobman's moll or moppet or to the *mec* which in present-day French is more or less "bloke" but which in Balzac's time, as *le Meg des megs*, comes to mean God, the Big Man, the Bloke, we might say, of blokes, including, I should like to think, translators.

For translation is not much less difficult than crime. Surfacing briefly, I shall, if I may, offer two generalisations about it. First, it is a two-fold activity. To begin with, you translate from a foreign language; then you translate into another language, which had better be your own, for your command of the language into which you translate is more important than your command of the foreign language. With difficulties in this you can enlist help, which you cannot to any large extent with your own language. My second generalisation goes as follows. Translation is more difficult than original writing. All writing is translation, but when you are merely translating what is in your head you can cheat. True, you must first have something in your head.

# The Problem of Mosley

*Why a Fascist Failed — By ROBERT SKIDELSKY*

IN A SENSE the life of Sir Oswald Mosley<sup>1</sup> can be seen simply as a personal tragedy. A man of brilliant gifts was ruined by fatal flaws of character. There is little to be said except pay a tribute to his qualities, describe his failings, indulge in a little psychologising and speculating on what might have been, and pass on to more serious matters. Yet the uncomfortable feeling remains that this is not the whole story—though it is undoubtedly a considerable part of it. Why, after all, was the political system *not* prepared to adopt his unemployment policy in 1930–31? Why, in particular, did the radical party shrink from the only measures that would have enabled it to fulfil its pledges to those who voted for it? The question becomes even more puzzling when we recall that not just Mosley but *anyone* with ideas, courage, and energy, was excluded from power or influence in the inter-war years. The roll-call of the neglected and the discarded includes the three most distinguished names in 20th-century British public life—Lloyd George, Churchill, and Keynes. It is true that they all made mistakes: Lloyd George cheated over peerages, Churchill went wild over the General Strike and India, Keynes stood convicted of intellectual arrogance. Yet the fact remains that each had a unique contribution to make, not only to the saving of millions of lives in this country from the wastage and horror of unemployment, but also to the saving of Europe from the much greater horror of another war. They were denied the opportunity, and even today well over half the people alive in England must be the poorer in health, wealth, experience and memory because of it—not to mention those who are dead.

Were these men excluded for their faults or for their virtues? The answer, surely, is that the two are inseparable. Great men usually have great faults: this is what makes them dangerous. But that is no reason for not using

them, provided they can be subject to control, for they can achieve things beyond the power of lesser mortals. The real question posed by Mosley's life, particularly in his Fascist phase, is whether it is possible to liberate the dynamic forces in individuals or groups and at the same time preserve a civilised framework of public life.

This dilemma is by no means spurious or irrelevant. Energy is fundamentally amoral. It is no counter of heads, or respecter of rights; it despises weakness and passivity. It can certainly be attached to moral objectives, but need not be. In any case, it is rarely associated with moral behaviour. The civilised régime deliberately seeks to dampen the fires of public energy for fear of the damage they might do to the social fabric. Yet the civilised régime, too, has a serious flaw. In Raymond Aron's words "such régimes are capable, not of committing monstrous actions, but of passively suffering the consequences of monstrous phenomena"<sup>2</sup>—for example, the world economic depression of 1929–1933. This is because they are by nature conservative, slow-moving, and small-thinking. Because they fear men eager to master great challenges, they are run by the mediocre and the timid—men incapable of doing great harm (except by neglect), but incapable of doing great good either. Moreover, such mandates as they might obtain from the electorate are largely undermined by the excessive influence they allow to what David Riesman has called the "veto-groups"—strategically placed lobbies or pressure groups without effective power to initiate action, but in an excellent position to stop anything being done inimical to their interests.<sup>3</sup> Such régimes suffer from a paralysis of executive power which can become dangerous in any situation where big choices are called for—as is arguably the case in Britain today over such questions as Europe, Race, and the system of government itself.

The problem of injecting a new vitality into the British system Mosley saw essentially as a cultural one. British politics was a closed cultural system, dominated by habits of mind, spirit, and conduct, which in his view no longer had much relation to the "harsh necessities of this age"—an age dominated by an unprece-

<sup>1</sup> *My Life*. By SIR OSWALD MOSLEY. Nelson, 70s.

<sup>2</sup> Raymond Aron, *Democracy and Totalitarianism* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968), p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd* (1961 ed.) p. 213 f.

dented rate of technical and cultural change. It attracted and produced a type of man "to whom action has become impossible." Mosley was not part of that culture. Nor, for that matter, were Lloyd George and Churchill. This may help to explain why all three saw certain things more clearly than their political contemporaries—and why they were hated for doing so.

IN HIS MEMOIRS, Mosley writes of "three very diverse experiences which wove me into the warp and woof of English life." The first was his family background. He sprang from a family of landed gentry who traced their ancestry back to King John. Of his grandfather who dominated his early years he writes, "His type and being were rooted in English soil." Life had changed little at Rolleston, the Mosley Staffordshire seat, over the centuries. It was "remote from the world, a remarkable, feudal, survival." The economy was "practically self-contained." In true feudal fashion "the warmest and most intimate friendships" developed between landlord and estate worker. "This was really a classless society."

In his political life Mosley took the "One Nation" ideal completely seriously. For the "bourgeois Tory mind with its crude class divisions of the cities" he had little time. To the charge levelled against him by the Tories of being a class traitor "my reply was simple: it is you, not I who betray our very English heritage, when you take the part of reaction against the people!" The Whig aristocrats had pioneered the major reforms of the 19th century. In the Labour Party, too, the aristocrats "were a great disappointment to MacDonald . . . they at once joined the Left." The great enemy was the bourgeoisie. MacDonald had fallen victim not to the aristocratic, but to the middle class, embrace.

Another legacy of his early upbringing is what Mosley describes as the "Cavalier attitude to life." In the 17th century the Mosleys were prominently identified with the Royalist cause and in the 18th century were intriguing for the Young Pretender—"a romantic tradition of opposition and insurgence" which, as Mosley writes, was transformed into the Whig gravity of the 19th century. But that was about as far as the Mosleys got to modern England. Nor was the transition complete. The reckless, Cavalier strain remained, especially in personal life. Of his mother's family he writes, "They were by nature much more respectable than the Mosleys, who always rather shocked them . . . they had not the complete freedom from inhibitions which was a characteristic of many Mosley." Indeed, if the Puritan approach to

life can be summed up (in Reich's phrase) as a "holding back," Mosley's was the exact antithesis. The young men of his class and generation "rushed towards life with arms outstretched to embrace the sunshine, and even the darkness, the light and shade which is the essence of existence, every varied enchantment of a glittering, wonderful world; a life rush, to be consummated."

The strong flavour which emerges from these passages on his childhood of an aristocracy and a working class united, not only by feudal relationships, but, as Lord Randolph Churchill only half-flippantly observed, "in the indissoluble bonds of a common immorality," has little connection with Victorian England, in which a rhetoric of high seriousness concealed the reality of an industrial exploitation inexorably compelling the masses to organise in their self-defence.

If Mosley took his healing vision from the aristocracy he took from the Army a method of organisation and a "certain attitude to manhood." From Winchester, Mosley had gone to Sandhurst; he fought bravely in the First World War, both as a volunteer in the infant Flying Corps, and later in the trenches, before being invalided out in 1916. Mosley was greatly attracted by the "collective character of regiments," by the combination of discipline and trust which made possible their great achievements; a combination which might yet be adapted to peaceful purposes when the "noble inspirations" used for war might be released for "creative achievement." Mosley brought to politics a definite military attitude. His most memorable remark—on Labour's performance in 1931—is a military one: "What would we think of a Salvation Army that took to its heels on the Day of Judgment?" He set out to create an Army that would not run away, that would inculcate "that sense of belonging to an *élite* of service and achievement" which he had found in the Army—an ideal which naturally attracted very much the same sort of recruit. "Around me," he recalls of his political army, "were men wearing every medal for gallantry the army has to offer. . . . They seemed to appear from nowhere, from the limbo into which Britain all too often casts those who have served it well." For Mosley, the *sur* was really a regiment—under his command. It provided "the most complete companionship I have ever known." He "reverted to type and lived in the spirit of the professional army where I began." Of the decision to put his men into uniform, he writes, "The old soldier in me got the better of the politician." It is not a bad summary of his political career.

His morality, too, is very much the morality

of an army officer. A political commentator in 1931 described him as a "Mussolini tempered by the decencies of Sandhurst." Honour, chivalry, respect for a brave foe, fighting with the "good clean English fist" are ideas that frequently crop up in this book. Hitler's genocide programme ran contrary to "the instinct of brave men... that you cannot kill helpless prisoners"; the same reaction prompted his early political campaigns against the Black and Tans and General Dyer's Amritsar massacre in 1919. Mosley cannot be called an amoralist: but it must be confessed that his morality has little to do with the Christian ethic or any belief in the brotherhood of man. It may be described as an intense loyalty and compassion to members of his own group, community, or "culture"; coupled with a relative indifference to the fate of outsiders. As to his commitment always to "fight clean," one can only say that to many observers it seemed to be more evident in the breach than in the observance.

IF MOSLEY TOOK HIS IDEAL from the aristocracy and his disciplined method from the army, it was to the working class that he looked to provide the energy for its realisation. "It was," he writes, "the dynamism of the Labour Party at that time which really attracted me, and this came mostly from the rank and file." For Mosley the working class was a regenerative force because it was uncontaminated by the political and personal inhibitions of the bourgeoisie. The two main centres of energy he found on the Clydeside and among the miners. He worked closely with the Clydeside leaders, who showed a "real impulse of vital feeling." Of John Wheatley, he writes, "he was the only man of Lenin quality the English Left ever produced." He admired the "blaring bands and flaunting banners" of the Durham miners' galas, symbols "then anathema to the shy middle class with its... inhibitions"; the "gay panache" of the East Londoners. A. J. Cook, the demagogic miners' leader, he regards as "a real product of England if ever there was one." Mosley's identification with the working class was an active one. "Every night," he recalls of his Labour Party speaking tours, "was passed in the house of a different member, nearly all manual workers.... The wife cooked and looked after us, gave the very best they had, and I have never been better cared for and made to feel more warmly welcome and accepted." In return, Mosley flung himself wholeheartedly on to the workers' side in the General Strike (which he nevertheless considered was a mistake), and was rewarded with considerable rank-and-file support. Indeed, he is the only major leader of the Labour Left who has had a strong union

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base—among the miners—though the bourgeois union leaders mistrusted him as an unsound intellectual.

The working class may well be uncontaminated by the political inhibitions of the bourgeois mind; large sections of it are singularly free likewise from bourgeois standards of public morality and respect for the rights of others that go with them. Mosley gradually added to his championing of working-class rights, a championing of working-class prejudices as well—against the Jews in the East End in the 1930s, against the coloured immigrants in the 1950s. These stands cannot be fully explained by considerations of *realpolitik*. Essentially they arose from the same feeling of sympathy for the *English* underdog that led him into the Labour Party in 1924, the feeling that the "goody-goodies," as Churchill called them, were prepared to put every interest above that of their fellow-countrymen; though the psychological pressure on the orator to say things that he knows will stir his audiences cannot be ignored. Today, with the elimination of overt economic oppression, it would appear that racial questions are the only ones capable of radicalising the working class. The long-term implications of this are not at all comforting. It would indeed be ironic and tragic if the British ruling class should have finally succeeded in creating what they have always tried to avoid—a "know-nothing" proletarian party, chauvinist and racist in outlook; and proving Mosley to be a precursor in this sphere, as in so many others.

ABSENT FROM MOSLEY'S ACCOUNT of the "warp and woof" of English life is any mention of the public schools, universities (he did not go to one), civil service, trade union or local government organisations, the legal profession, industry and finance: the great seminaries of the English governing *élites*, bastions of civic middle-class culture. This omission justifies the frequent view of Mosley as an alien politician—"alien," that is, to the dominant political culture of his time, no longer nourished from the soil from which Mosley sprang. A hundred years ago, Bagehot discerned the underlying truth, then still obscured behind an aristocratic façade, that it was the middle classes who wielded "the despotic power in England"; that what passed for public opinion was the opinion of the "heavily sensible class—the last people in the world to whom, if they were drawn up in a row, an immense nation would ever give an exclusive preference."<sup>4</sup> It was this

<sup>4</sup> *The English Constitution* (1867; Fontana ed. 1963), pp. 247-8.

class that gave to the "fickle and protean" England of Tudor times<sup>5</sup> its recognisably modern (though no longer contemporary) shape and flavour—serious, sound, and sanctimonious. Its virtues were worthy and mediocre rather than exciting, but it gave to English public life its "rules of the game"—a civilised framework of public life which shielded it from the excesses of the Continent. Mosley was not part of this England. He spurned it, and it rejected him. Like so many activists, he looked to the losers rather than to the winners of the 19th-century social struggle to restore a lost heritage of dynamism and greatness.

I do not wish to imply that Mosley can be explained—or explained away—by his class background. A county background still produces many slightly choleric Tory squires, whose "One Nation" thinking scarcely goes beyond the boundaries of their rural retreats. Able Sandhurst products become generals, not politicians. Certain personal qualities and one decisive circumstance carried Mosley to a leading position in English politics. The qualities were a powerful mind, a gift of eloquence, and an enormous energy. The decisive circumstance was the First World War. It was the war that turned his attention to politics. The war-time state had given him some inkling of the possibilities of social organisation. It was easy for gallant officers to pick up parliamentary seats. The party battle was temporarily suspended. Above all, the catastrophic slaughter of the war gave him a strong sense of mission: to ensure that war never happened again, to build "a land fit for heroes."

It was this mixture of social idealism and raw intellectual energy, grafted on to a squirearchical-military stem, that produced the explosive phenomenon of Mosley the politician. The difficulties of classifying him emerge in some of the encomiums reproduced in this book: "could well have been either Conservative or Labour Prime Minister," etc. In the space of ten years Mosley moved from Unionist to Independent to Labour and finally to Fascist, virtually taking in the Liberal Party on the way. His policies combined causes dear to the heart of progress with causes dear to the heart of reaction. "The most irrational antithesis of our time," he writes, "always seemed to me to be the conflict between the progress of the Left and the stability of the Right... My programme cut right across it... Progress was impossible without stability, and stability was impossible without progress."

Nor do alternative classifications along a

<sup>5</sup> The phrase is Max Nicholson's in *The System* (1967), p. 34.

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"tough-minded—tender-minded" axis help very much. Many of Mosley's political attitudes, Left or Right, were certainly "tough-minded": on the other hand, he has been a pacifist in international relations and a libertarian over personal questions. He was neither an honest Tory with old-fashioned prejudices, nor an honest Liberal with new-fashioned ones.

NOR IS IT EASIER to fit his methods into a recognisable syndrome. He combined the most gentlemanly behaviour in private with very ungentlemanly conduct in public; the methods of reasoned argument with those of demagoguery—"the high road" and the "low road" as one commentator remarked of his 1959 North Kensington election campaign. I am not saying that these contrasts cannot be logically or emotionally reconciled, or that history would not yield many examples of similar ideological and temperamental syndromes. The fact nevertheless remains that Mosley is not a contemporary English political type. It is as if a character from the 16th or 17th century had suddenly been transported into the modern English world, with a mission to make his mark upon it. "The great secret," Mosley writes, "is to be in the rhythm of your age." As far as the English political classes were concerned, Mosley

certainly was not. He disturbed their rhythm, with its muted oscillations. He was both too old-fashioned and too advanced at the same time.

NEVERTHELESS, THIS IDEOLOGICAL and temperamental remoteness from the modern world did have certain definite advantages. The essence of creativity is the ability to see familiar phenomena in new combinations and juxtapositions, to approach the raw material of life with an imagination unencumbered by stale images or conventional categories. It is no coincidence that the universities have not produced a single creative politician in the last hundred years: Joseph Chamberlain, Lloyd George, Winston Churchill, Mosley—none of them were university men. What they all had in common was a sense or intuition that the world was not quite as their contemporaries saw it. They were sensitive to certain important currents of their time which escaped those trained to think in a certain way. Chamberlain saw that the Free Trade world of 19th-century liberalism was dying. Lloyd George saw that the social question had destroyed the rationale of *laissez-faire* at home. Churchill saw with a terrible prescience the coming struggle between



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England and Germany. The sources of these profound intuitions vary. Churchill's was derived from history; Joseph Chamberlain and Lloyd George knew no history: they were hyper-sensitive to the vibrations of the external world. Mosley, too, heard the distant hoofbeat of history. Again, it is difficult to say from where. He was not a historical generaliser like Churchill; he knows history, but his vision is not derived from it; it is brought in to support conclusions reached quite independently of it. Nor was his attitude to life formed by ideas: he admired Shaw, Nietzsche, Goethe, Keynes; he studied the great men of action; but all they did was to provide words or illustrations for what he already felt to be true. Mosley learnt whatever he knew "from life," not from books. He absorbed from it what was necessary to the fulfilment of his own nature. His mind was uncluttered by intellectual luggage. This was a great strength—and weakness. It enabled him to focus on many of the right questions: it also made him blind to many others which should have been weighed in the balance.

The most notable aspect of Mosley's thinking is the entire absence of any "isms." This is not to say that he didn't have strong attitudes to life, that there were not certain things he passionately wanted to do. But he did not view the world through the intellectual constructs which dominated the minds of his political contemporaries. Of the Free Trade Protection debate he writes: "My approach to it was purely pragmatic. Whether you had one system or not was a question of circumstance. If it was raining you needed an umbrella, if the sun was shining, you did not." It was as if a 4th-century church leader had proclaimed his indifference to the Athanasian-Arian controversy! Similarly, he was untouched by the other great contemporary debate, between socialism and *laissez-faire* capitalism. He regarded these questions as questions of means rather than ends. The same attitude marked his approach to parties: were they or were they not effective instruments for doing what had to be done? In the *Sunday Chronicle* (23 July 1933) he wrote, revealingly, "We were right to give Socialism a chance. We were also right, when the Labour Party failed, to abandon the old party system..." Nothing could be more indicative of his approach than this view of the instrumentality of ideas and movements. How different from Keynes who in the *General Theory* describes his long struggle to "escape from habitual modes of thought and expression." Mosley's habitual modes of thought and expression were non-political, for he was not a child of the political culture. That is why he did not have to divest himself of them before he could begin to think creatively about politics.

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**ROUTLEDGE  
&  
KEGAN PAUL**

HIS CAPACITY TO DISCERN important shifts in reality ahead of his contemporaries is indeed impressive. In the 1920s Mosley sensed that the economic debate between *laissez-faire* capitalism and bureaucratic socialism was irrelevant. He discerned that demand rather than distribution was the overriding problem of Western society at that time. Hence he was able to focus his energy on the unemployment problem, and emerge, well ahead of his time, "as the prophet of a "managed capitalism." This is not all. A visit to America convinced him that modern techniques of mass production had destroyed the basis of small-scale, national economies. It followed that Britain had to enter into a larger economic system. In the 1930s that system was the Empire; by 1947 he was urging that Britain take the lead in creating a united Europe. In the 1930s he saw that any major European war must result in the division of Europe into, American and Russian spheres of influence, thus destroying the possibility of its independent development. He was probably wrong in thinking that a war could have been averted on any terms consistent with England's safety and independence; but he was right in foreseeing its consequences, and right—it seems to me—in the conclusion which he drew from it that the old world must unite to redress the balance of the new. He saw again that the existing English system of government and politics seriously inhibited the adaptations England needed to make to new circumstances—a view which is once more on the verge of serious discussions—though he was certainly wrong in seeing Fascism as the "modern" answer to the problem.

These perceptions were extremely unwelcome to the Establishment. Mosley's success in thinking up good policies was matched by his inability to get them adopted. English political life over the last 50 years has not lacked in ideas. The English have continued to produce good ideas, like good inventions. The trouble is that more often than not they are adopted abroad rather than at home. Keynes' economic policies were tried in many countries before England got round to using them; Liddell Hart's chief disciple was the German General Guderian. It is not enough to explain the failure to use good ideas simply by the inertia of institutions. Some institutions are more inert or unreceptive than others. Why is it that the forces of "conventional wisdom" in this country have become so strongly entrenched? Or put another way, why is it that the energising, vital, forces, have become so attenuated?

Mosley's explanation is rather uneven. He recognises the largely unacknowledged hold of certain powerful ideas—particularly the idea of

internationalism which, as he remarks, makes British socialism a *de facto* ally of finance capitalism—but does not really pursue this line much further. He is alive to certain defects in the machinery of government and has, at different times, proposed changes—smaller Cabinets, reorganisation of the departments, speeding up parliamentary procedure—which have also been canvassed by many others. Of the civil service he has a surprisingly high opinion, blaming most of its alleged failings on the incompetence of its political chiefs.

It is indeed on what he considers to be the psychological failure of the political class that he directs his main attack. Here he plunges somewhat rashly into Freudian explanations—though denying them any validity for an understanding of his own character. The attitude of political “negation” which Keynes criticised in 1930 he identifies with the “catastrophe of Puritanism.” He traces a link between personal inhibition, derived from a Puritan upbringing, and public inhibition characterised by a negative response to big challenges. Thus he identifies public failures with failures of Puritan, middle-class culture. He contrasts this with the amoral energy of a Lloyd George, an energy which the civilised political groups viewed as threatening and disruptive, just as society feels

threatened by breaches of its sexual and moral codes. Yet it was Lloyd George, he writes, who “in tragic paradox” might have realised the “fine ideals” of the class that feared him. “His faults were obvious . . . what did they matter in comparison with his extraordinary capacity to get things done, if he were under the right influence, aimed in the right direction? They should have forgiven Lloyd George’s minor faults, and embraced his genius to use it for fine ends.” No doubt he had himself very much in mind when he wrote this passage.

This account, especially in its implication that somehow political energy is associated with sexual freedom, is unsatisfactory as it stands. The “inner-directed” Puritan is usually considered capable of great achievement precisely *because* his energy has been diverted from instinctual gratification to the “tasks of life.” Repression is the spur to achievement, not a hindrance to it, by permitting the concentration of energy on one object, rather than allowing it to be dispersed over many. Mosley would be on much firmer ground, in my view, if he made a distinction between the Puritan culture at its zenith, which equipped its leaders with a superb self-confidence, and the Puritan culture in its decline, which riddles them with self-doubts. It is this decline which is probably the

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chief explanation of the humbug which he finds such a characteristic feature of the current political scene: something which arises when real commitment has become a cliché, no longer believed in, but somehow too painful to abandon. In this sense, no doubt, MacDonald, Baldwin, Hoare, Simon and all the dreadful "old gangs" of the 1920s and 1930s were "whited sepulchres" as Mosley claims; not because they were sexually repressed, but because they lacked inner conviction.

Mosley could have done with some good old-fashioned Puritan self-discipline in his own life. I very much doubt whether he would ever have been a very successful party leader, though he might, under suitable circumstances, have been an extraordinary Prime Minister. What he had to do above all else was to avoid discrediting himself beyond repair. A "reputable" Mosley might have been able to swing British opinion behind Europe in the 1950s, to play Jo Chamberlain to Macmillan's Balfour. Yet discredited he did become through a series of misjudgments that deprived him of any chance of serving his country. It was largely a matter of temperament. Although Mosley likes to picture himself as a model of "cool determination" and "icy realism" he was in fact a hot-head who time and again ruined his chances by rash action. One commentator has noted perceptively: "His defects are those of a cavalry officer under a temperamental compulsion to charge." In this he resembles his Cavalier ancestors. He was a Prince Rupert rather than an Oliver Cromwell.

THIS, I AM CONVINCED, is the right way to view Mosley's actions in the 1930s and afterwards. He was by instinct a fighter, not a Machiavellian, for no Machiavellian would ever have been so unsuccessful. Moreover, he was a fighter who had only one response: *Charge!* "We shall win; or we shall return upon our shields," he cried in 1931—not just to encourage his troops, but because he felt that way. He describes a number of disputes with fellow cadets at Sandhurst, generally ending with Mosley challenging his opponent to a fight. He says he was "already becoming too adult for that sort of thing." This judgment is not borne out by his political career which, from its earliest days, was marked by an extreme pugnacity, by a wounding invective, by an over-reaction to slights and insults (real and imagined) and in general, by a method of controversy that polarised opinion. Whereas many of Mosley's ideas, though revolutionary in terms of the British political culture, were ideas of the centre, capable of winning wide and distinguished "moderate" support, his methods were those of the extreme, gradually alienating those who would gladly have worked with him, but

who were not prepared to stomach the "Biff Boy" elements which he increasingly considered necessary to his crusade. One can overdraw this picture, for on occasion—as in his resignation of 1930—Mosley was capable of behaving with tact and decorum. Throughout 1930 in fact we see him at his very best, with his concern for the unemployed conveyed in speeches and arguments remorseless in their logic, dignified in their expression, and passionate in their feeling. But he was incapable of holding this, admittedly difficult, balance for any length of time. The demonic urge for action *at all costs* gripped him. The politics of self-discipline gave way to the politics of self-expression, with results fatal to his career and the causes for which he stood.

And yet a lingering doubt remains. Given the English political system, could that balance between creative thought and civilised political behaviour ever have been maintained for long, by someone who actually wanted to get things done, rather than wait for history's verdict? Is civilised political behaviour always the supreme virtue? Was it not worth dislocating the civilised routines of British politics to cure mass unemployment? Most people would rightly accept a certain level of economic suffering in preference to a Fascist or Communist dictatorship. But what about a temporary parliamentary dictatorship of the kind Lloyd George and Churchill exercised in war—and headed by similar people? Would that not in fact have been the answer? Was this not the only method which would have enabled radical solutions to be applied in a political framework that remained recognisably civilised and humane?

For Mosley's Fascist career is an illustration of what happens when such a common-sense solution is denied by a political system. The creative thinking is separated from the civilised political framework in which it can find no expression. That framework comes to be seen not as a necessary defence against excess, but as an impediment to action of any kind. Not only are the particular policies of the "old gangs" repudiated, but also the whole political environment in which they operate. If the distress is great enough, whole sections of the population are shifted from their stable and relatively "safe" political moorings and become mobilised into radical movements. In this way radical ideas which in themselves offer no threat to civilised political behaviour become attached to social forces and methods which do. A perfectly reputable case against international finance degenerates into an anti-Semitic one; a nationalist case into a racist one, and so on. The radicalisation of one section produces a parallel radicalisation of the other, and the politics of violence and villains comes to replace the politics of reason.

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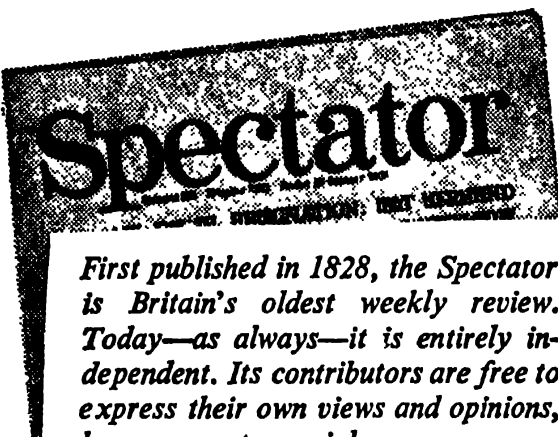
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By all means, then, let us blame Mosley and give full weight to all the temperamental traits that led him to his dismal present. But this no more disposes of the problem posed by his life than does the "betrayal" of Ramsay MacDonald dispose of the problem of Labour's failure in 1929-1931. In both cases we have to deal not just with the faults of men but with the faults of the systems they tried, and failed, to work. Only with that extra dimension does the story of Mosley become fully comprehensible.

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## LETTERS

### Nietzsche, Syphilis, & Vulgarities

MR. NEFASTUS DIES has accused me [ENCOUNTER, April] of ignoring the medical evidence about Nietzsche's madness in suggesting that it was in some way the outcome of his thought; but I am not as adventurous as he thinks. For tertiary syphilis—if indeed Nietzsche's illness was the result of syphilitic infection—may explain his insanity; but if Mr. Dies, for example, became syphilitic I doubt if the approach of insanity would be as illuminated by the gleams of self-deifying genius as Nietzsche's was. What needs to be explained—and is not explained at all by citing medical evidence—is the particular intellectual content of incipient insanity in Nietzsche, and this is what I was concerned with.

Mr. Walter Kaufmann is admirable as an editor of Nietzsche, but mediocre as a practitioner of invective ["Nietzsche as Scapegoat," ENCOUNTER, July]. Let me assure him that our disagreement is not entirely what he thinks it is. I accept in very large part Mr. Kaufmann's interpretation of the *Übermensch*; it is the concept of the *Übermensch* thus understood that I find tedious, vulgar, and banal. That Mr. Kaufmann feels free to so largely ignore what I wrote and instead to speculate abusively about my motives reinforces my view that we do not differ very much over the interpretation of Nietzsche but a great deal in our ability to recognise vulgarity.

ALASDAIR MACINTYRE

University of Essex

### "Progressivism as a Reactionary Utopia"

IN HIS THIRD paragraph, Mr. Maurice Ash [ENCOUNTER, August] challenges me on a point of fact, and questions my professional integrity. I find this astonishing, for anyone who looks up pages 36-38 in Mr. Ash's book will find that my review [ENCOUNTER, May] is completely accurate.

On page 36 Mr. Ash tells us that at the Dartington Colloquy Kenneth Barnes turned the tables on conventional arguments, and denied that progressive schools "were in some way a preparation for an ideal world, the world in which all conflict would be resolved." These words are followed by a full-page transcript of Mr. Barnes' elaboration of his argument. After this comes this commentary by Mr. Ash, from which I quote:

"In speaking thus, Kenneth Barnes was, as in honesty bound, even adding to the confusion of the scene. For not only were the old progressives finding themselves at odds with the new progressives at the Dartington Colloquy but among them-

selves there were undercurrents of unresolved disagreements. Many a proponent of Progressive Education, for instance, would find it hard to renounce the thought that, somewhere, that form of education was the precursor of a better world, a world of 'sanity,' in which all conflict would be solved. Historically, as Hu Child pointed out, the progressive schools have conducted their affairs on the principle of co-operation rather than of competition (whether of marks or honours). To some, it is probably true to say, this principle has come to assume a key significance, foreshadowing a new kind of world such as only Progressive Education could bring about. To others, it has probably remained of no more importance than as a device for saving the individual child from the social oppressions endemic in orthodox education. Undoubtedly, the

representatives of progressive schools at the Dartington Colloquy were handicapped by their own diversity of view in face of the uniform egalitarian attitude of the new progressives. This confusion in their ranks, moreover, is clearly carried over into the wider world, and is made evident in their inability to speak with one voice in face of common dangers."

In other words, this issue *was* discussed at Dartington, and according to Mr. Ash it was central to their debates. In my review I pointed out that the Dartington representatives "all disagreed completely about what 'progressivism' means."

Attacks on our *Black Paper on Education* have repeatedly moved in this way from inaccuracy to personal abuse.

University of Manchester

C. B. Cox

## David Astor & the German Opposition

### *Pro et Contra (continued)*

I HAVE READ DAVID ASTOR'S ARTICLE ON Adam von Trott and the German Opposition to Hitler [ENCOUNTER, June] with great and absorbed interest, especially as quite recently I was able, as translator and reader, to assist Mr. Christopher Sykes while he was writing his *Troubled Loyalty*. This gave me a welcome opportunity for widening such knowledge of the subject as I had acquired here during the war and at Nuremberg after it, since the literature, mostly German, that has been published by scholars and survivors in, say, the last five years, is considerable and often fascinating. I fully agree with Mr. Astor that the time has come to tell the whole story, *sine ira ac studio*, from both sides of the hill. It will be a formidable task.

However, to my sincere regret I am unable to agree with some of Mr. Astor's basic assumptions and conclusions. He tells us, for example, that Mr. Sykes has distorted to the point of travesty the Trott whom his fellow-conspirators inside Nazi Germany experienced and that, secondly, Sir John Wheeler-Bennett almost basely abandoned Trott despite earlier encouragement and friendship. Mr. Astor thinks that in this negative and falsely critical attitude to Trott these two eminent British experts enabled other scholars to glide over the embarrassments caused by the failure "to respond to approaches [by the German opposition] which can *now* be seen to have deserved some response." My italics, for now is the key word here.

*Could it have been seen at the time?* Space forbids me to go into the question of what kind of impression Trott left behind, after his visits in 1939 to London and Cliveden, with those who were not personal friends. It is perhaps not difficult to understand that at a time when opinion and feeling in this country were turning so strongly against

the government's cautious and appeasing foreign policy, Trott being vouched for by so ambiguous a "liberal" as the late Lord Lothian can scarcely have inspired with confidence those who were concerned with strengthening the country's powers of resistance.

Yet, Trott's not fortunate debut as an anti-Nazi in England and America in 1939-40 need not have been a fatal handicap. Broadly speaking, the tasks of a civilian conspirator from 1940 onwards consisted in preparing with others the ground for Hitler's overthrow and take-over by a decent and responsible government, while it was left to the army, to a handful of non-Nazi top Generals to deliver the blow that would rid the German *Reich* of Hitler and his gang. Like Mr. Astor, I found Professor Harold Deutsch's *The Conspiracy against Hitler in the Twilight War* (Oxford, 1968) a most important book, perhaps the most important study so far written on the German Opposition. What does it tell us about the role played by a key figure in the conspiracy, General Halder, at the time Army Chief of Staff? Professor Deutsch calls him a military weather vane. Once the decision to invade Poland had become irrevocable, Halder thought that after a military set-back, such as Allied air raids on the Ruhr, the time would be ripe for the anti-Hitler coup. When Poland was conquered and the "administration" of the country turned over to the SS and SD, while *Wehrmacht* divisions and commanders were being transferred to Germany's Western frontiers, Halder, greatly impressed by the "imposing German military posture" in the West, foresaw a series of "really great successes" in the forthcoming Western campaign (Deutsch, p. 274). His set-back theory now turned into its opposite and he thought that once Germany had

been victorious in the West, the Wehrmacht would be strong enough to deal with the Hitler régime at home.

Although this type of trimming without a compass drastically diminished Halder's value as an oppositional key figure, it was by no means the worst flaw in his make-up. What finishes Halder, and a good many of his fellow-Generals in the Nazi state, is another item of information given by the scrupulously fair and sympathetic Professor Deutsch. As Himmler and Heydrich moved into Poland with their murder squads, Halder was being spontaneously provided by nauseated German soldiers and officers with documentary evidence—memoranda by eye witnesses, photographs, statistics, even films—that proved beyond doubt the full horrors of Nazi policy—murder, plunder, war on women and children, liquidating whole racial groups and social classes. Halder said afterwards that for weeks he had a loaded revolver in his pocket and death in his heart whenever he went to see Hitler on official business, but finally decided that "as a soldier and a Christian" he could not bring himself to "shoot down an unarmed man." As the great build-up in the West went on, Halder said to other conspirators things like "One does not rebel when standing with one's nose before the enemy—it conflicts with tradition"; "reports on Polish atrocities have been exaggerated"; "one must allow Hitler this last chance to save Germany from British capitalism"; and other statements of the kind. This at a time when, as Halder knew, an intrepid group of Roman Catholic oppositionists were, through the Vatican, in touch with the British Minister there; Pope Pius XII virtually violated Vatican neutrality to get the two enemy powers talking to each other. As Hitler made ready to conquer further foreign territories for subjection to his party formations, the most that could be said of Halder is that, in so far as he was approachable at all to members of the opposition, he simply passed the "kill Hitler" buck to others.

WHEN FINALLY ONE BEARS in mind that on 8 November 1939, there occurred the Venlo incident at the German-Dutch border during which two British Intelligence men were captured by the *Gestapo* on Dutch soil after having been lured there by a cleverly faked German Freedom Radio Station so that a trusting British government became a laughing stock; when to this one adds the failure of the Vatican negotiations with Sir Francis d'Arcy Osborne, the failure being so largely due to weather-vane Halder, one is, at least up to the time when Russia was attacked, unable to see how on the British side of the hill much hope could be entertained of getting rid of Hitler with the help of the German military and political sword. And non-Nazi German generals were, of course, among the trump cards Trott had to play during his risky and courageous missions abroad.

A second weakness of his whole position impeded his success as a war-time emissary to Switzer-

land, Sweden, Turkey (where he pinned his faith on Papen) and elsewhere. This was his conviction, often expressed, that Nazism was in its root not a German, but a European malaise. While men like Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Helmut von Moltke, as Germans (though not "Greater Germans") in war-time Germany most movingly expressed their abhorrence of the whole Nazi apparatus at a depth that transcended merely political solutions and, under the impact of the Polish abominations, General Stieff wrote "I am ashamed to be a German," this note was not heard so much from Trott or many of the diplomats and civil servants around him. It is therefore hardly to be wondered at that *under the circumstances of the time*, when (as Arthur Koestler wrote in 1943) unscheduled trains of cattle trucks were transporting across a darkened Europe their human cargo towards the final solution, Wheeler-Bennett should have despaired of finding the answer to Hitler with German assistance, and that twenty-five years after the war Mr. Sykes in his biographical research found a human being of many colours.

IN MY OWN VIEW, the ultimate and tragic misunderstanding arising from Trott's position and individual character is that as the war went on and the total satanism of the Third *Reich* shook him as a man and German to the core, his true self which Mr. Astor and a not very large group of personal friends had experienced before the war, emerged strengthened, steeled and revitalised from this overwhelming ordeal. The evidence (and consequently Mr. Sykes) suggests that both his inclusion in Moltke's Kreisau Circle and his close friendship with a similarly regenerated Claus von Stauffenberg helped Trott to this astonishing inner renewal. This does not mean that he had first to shuffle off the Nazi coil in his make-up—that, patently, was never there. He had, however, to free himself of that fateful eclecticism (from which Lord Lothian had also suffered) of using what was "good" in Hitler—in Trott's case the Austrian *Anschluss* and a Far Eastern "Munich"—while the evil was left to be dealt with at some future moment. That the whole of Hitlerism was absolutely evil was a realisation that came late to many people in most countries, and this moral deficiency doubtless increased the agony of those on the German side of the hill who had rejected Hitler and his régime from the earliest months after 1933.

Like David Astor I look forward to the day when British archives will be opened to reveal the whys and wherefores of the failure later in the war to establish contact. I wholeheartedly share his view, as expressed in the final part of his *ENCOUNTER* article, that the whole tragedy should be unrolled in a way that would give Adam von Trott, not a leading role, but his appropriate place in a group of remarkable and—sometimes outstanding men.

HAROLD KURTZ

Oxford



### Adam von Trott in Holland

MR. DAVID ASTOR's recent article in *ENCOUNTER* brought back to my mind my contacts with Adam von Trott during the years of the Nazi occupation of my country.

It was in 1942 that I first met Trott in The Hague at the house of a friend, Mr. Patijn, who, like myself, was a member of the Scholten-group in the Dutch resistance. Trott had come to Holland in order to establish contact between his branch of the German opposition to Hitler and the Dutch resistance. He had been introduced and recommended to us by a Dutch friend who was willing to vouch for his absolute good faith and reliability.

During that first of several clandestine meetings Trott explained his mission to us. Without mentioning names—a necessary precaution in those days—he told us that he was a member of a group which could be described as a coalition of a certain number of Hitler's German adversaries. Among its members were Catholic and Protestant Churchmen, Socialist workers, Army Officers, Government officials, etc. The group, he said, had its secret representatives in different departments of Hitler's Government.

Trott offered to keep us informed, as far as possible, of measures which might be taken against inhabitants of occupied Holland. He hoped also that through the influence different members of his group had in high Government circles it would occasionally be possible to get Nazi sentences against prominent Hollanders commuted. His one request to us was that we should keep our Government-in-exile in London informed of our contacts with him and his group and to inform our authorities that his conspirational group were intent upon displacing Hitler (he used the term "*Hitler zu beseitigen*") at the appropriate moment.

My friends and I were much impressed by Trott, whom we liked from the start and whom we found every reason to trust.

During the following two years and up to the moment of the attempt on Hitler's life by Stauffenberg on 20 July 1944 we remained in touch with Trott and his group either through visits to Holland by Trott and his friend Helmut von Moltke, or through the intermediary whom they appointed: the banker von Goerschen of The Hague, a former German citizen, who a few years before the war had acquired the Dutch nationality and who, owing to his German connections, was free to travel between Holland and Germany whenever he wished. Trott and his friends (their opposition group later, after the war, became known to us as the "*Kreisauer Kreis*" of which also Stauffenberg was a member) were of considerable help to us during all that time.

We, on the Dutch side, under the prevailing conditions of occupation and oppression were not in a position to contribute in any important way to Trott's efforts in his own country. The one thing we could do and did do consistently was to keep our Government in London informed of the existence and the work of the Kreisau conspirators.

When the conspirators' "coup" of 20 July 1944 failed, we in Holland saw it as a tragedy—

especially so as it could only mean a prolongation of the war and a further loss of many lives. Very soon after we learned of the wide-spread arrests and the several thousands of executions of conspirators or suspected conspirators at personal orders of Hitler.

Among those executed was our friend Adam von Trott. Our resistance group continued to remember him as a brave and dedicated man, whose fundamental loyalty was to humanity. We realised from the start that to belong to the German "*Widerstand*" (the opposition to Hitler) implied a moral courage of a special order, because it meant opposing one's country's leadership in a time of dire peril to the nation. It was this type of courage which Trott proved to possess to such a high degree and which we, his Dutch friends, had learned to respect and deeply admire.

J. H. VAN ROIJEN

London

### Well-meaning Helpers

IS NOT MR. DAVID ASTOR trying to force an open door? It is not now, and I don't think it was ever, generally doubted that Adam von Trott was indeed an honest anti-Nazi. What was doubted was whether he could legitimately expect to be trusted and receive support. Was he, in technical terms, a good risk or a bad risk?

I fear by 1943-44 the record of history was in no way such as to inspire confidence in Germans standing up to tyranny. In saying this, I am not impugning the character of many of those who conspired to do away with Hitler. Some probably were opportunists, but most were civilised men and women outraged by the abomination of Nazism. However, actors (even would-be actors) on the stage of history must submit to stringent standards.

Idealism, like patriotism, is not enough. What is needed is, in the cold terms of realistic politics, evidence of practical usefulness, a determination of material strength which can strike as a revolutionary force. On this showing, it was held that the resistance was not likely to secure the destruction of Hitler.

This opinion was widely shared. Even so staunch a champion of the resistance as the late Professor Gerhard Ritter, the historian, has noted the pathetic spectacle of "earnestly imploring hands being stretched across the Channel by Germans of the Opposition as well-meaning as they were helpless..." In fact, the resisters were few, of indifferent judgment, uncertain in the face of a savage tyrant, divided in counsel and, worst of all, bereft of resolution.

They were by no means, even within living memory, the first Germans to offer so dispiriting a spectacle. Twelve years before 1944, on another sombre 20th of July, the Prussian Social Democrats, challenged by Hitler's forerunners, sadly failed to resist. They simply tamely surrendered, determined only to "yield to force" which was promptly supplied. This was done at a time when the resisters were well entrenched in power and had at the very



least a sporting chance of survival. What could have been expected of a resistance demoralised by years of compromise, torn in spirit and faced with the daunting task of gaining power, even from so ruthless a tyrant as Hitler.

Those anti-Nazi Generals who did not strike in 1936, at the Rhineland crisis, or in 1938, at the Fritsch crisis, could not reasonably expect to be considered likely to strike now. Besides, how much confidence did they hope to inspire if, on their own showing, they had no leader, but relied almost entirely on a foreign (British) command?

With all the respect that is due to their high-minded enterprise, they had too little to commend them, and in the circumstances of the time, against the example shown by history, those asked to trust them had—whatever the verdict of hindsight—every reason to beware. Trott was a good man, animated by the very best intentions. But those called to take a hand in the affairs of history are cut from a very different cloth.

C. C. ARONSFELD

*Harrow, Middlesex*

### The View from Geneva

I AM GLAD TO FIND that at last the question why the revolt against Hitler was ignored is becoming the subject of public discussion. For I believe that several aspects of that question have not yet been sufficiently clarified.

There are two reasons why I am specially interested in this discussion. The first is that from 1940 to 1944 I was in constant touch with representatives of the German opposition. Many of these men came to visit us in Geneva because they considered the World Council of Churches a useful channel for contacts with the outside world. Adam von Trott was one of the most regular visitors. I believe that he made no fewer than seven visits to Geneva between 1940 and 1944.

The second reason is that I transmitted several times messages from the German resistance to Great Britain and America. The most important of these messages was the document drawn up by Adam von Trott for the British Government which I brought to London in April 1942. I gave this memorandum personally to Sir Stafford Cripps and asked him to submit it to the Prime Minister.

I believe therefore that I can throw some light on the issues which have come up in the discussion between Mr. David Astor and Mr. Christopher Sykes [*ENCOUNTER*, December, June and July].

One of these issues is: when did Adam von Trott

become an active member of the opposition? I must answer that as soon as I heard in 1940 about the formation of opposition groups his name was included among those who were actively involved. And this was no surprise to me. I had known Adam since his student days. I had met him from time to time in the 1930s. In 1936 I described my meeting with him in Kassel in a letter to my wife and concluded: "You know where he stood and he has not changed." And when he came to Geneva in 1940 I found that he was more determined than ever to resist National Socialism and that he was now engaged in the formation of centres of resistance.

The next issue is in how far the German opposition counted on foreign help to succeed in their plans to overthrow the Hitler régime. It seems to me quite clear that they counted very strongly on such help. Even Dietrich Bonhoeffer whose motivation was so purely religious, realised that (as he put it in a memorandum in the drafting of which I collaborated and which I transmitted to William Paton in 1941) "the question must be faced whether a German government which makes a complete break with Hitler and all he stands for, can hope to get such terms of peace that it has some chance to survive." Adam von Trott felt the same way. It was hard enough to get the generals to take action. They could only be convinced if it could be shown that there was a real possibility that their action could lead to a tolerable solution for the country.

THAT IS WHY Adam von Trott was so terribly disappointed when I had to tell him on my return from London that the answer which I brought from London was not the one he had hoped for. When I had visited Sir Stafford for the second time he had told me that Mr. Churchill had read the document, written in the margin "*very encouraging*," but did not want to give a reply. Sir Stafford explained that Germany would first have to be defeated. There should be a clear demonstration that National Socialism could not be tolerated. But after the defeat Germany would get fair treatment. This was the official reaction or lack of reaction. Some unofficial views were somewhat more encouraging. R. H. S. Crossman and A. D. Lindsay both made the point that if the German opposition would really succeed in overthrowing Hitler a new situation would be created and new possibilities might arise.

But the answer which I had to take back to Geneva and to report to von Trott was essentially negative. The British government was not willing to give any encouragement to the German resistance and not even ready to enter into any dialogue with it. I have not forgotten that summer night in my garden in Geneva when I was trying to find words to encourage Adam who was near despair.

IT SEEMS TO ME that the non-reaction of the British government was really determined by three considerations.

The first was the fear of creating the impression that Great Britain and the U.S.A. were working for a separate peace behind the back of the U.S.S.R.

*W. A. VISSER 'T HOOFT has been for more than thirty years the Dutch General-Secretary of the World Council of Churches, at its Geneva headquarters. He is the author of a dozen theological works, including Anglo-Catholicism and Orthodoxy (1928) and Rembrandt and the Gospel (1958).*

Dr. A. D. Lindsay said in a discussion on the Trott memorandum that it would be "indecent" to allow the Germans to drive a wedge between the Western Allies and the Russians. And it should perhaps not be forgotten that Rudolf Hess had just arrived in Scotland with very crude ideas about a common alliance against Russia.

The second reason was purely the very general conviction that Germany could only be purged by a complete military defeat. This point came up in practically every conversation in Britain about the Trott memorandum.

I am less certain about the third reason. This may well have been the experience of 1939 at the Hague and at Venlo in Holland. It will be recalled that two British intelligence officers held solemn discussions with Walter Schellenberg, believing that the latter was a representative of the opposition though in fact he was chief of the foreign branch of the Nazi intelligence service. It is unlikely that that incident had been forgotten by 1942. And the various rumours circulating about von Trott could easily have led to the conclusion that his approach was just an attempt to repeat the "Venlo incident."

WERE THESE good reasons? Were they a sufficient justification for the refusal to give any real encouragement to the opposition in Germany? I believe that these reasons were indeed strong, but that they did not justify a purely negative attitude. It seems to me that imaginative statesmanship could have found a way to encourage the German opposition without giving up the principles underlying allied policy. Would it not have been possible to say:

"We cannot negotiate with you. We do not know whether you deserve to be taken seriously. We do not want to create the suspicion that we are interested in a separate peace. But we are perfectly willing to tell you what our plans are for the future of Europe. In that Europe there will be a place for a Germany which will have broken with National Socialism. We intend to achieve military victory. But if a complete change comes in Germany it may not be necessary to continue the war. In that case a new situation will be created. We will judge a new government by its acts and if it takes a constructive line we will surely be ready to offer it conditions of peace which will allow Germany to survive and to have its normal place among the nations."

I believe that such language would have made a very great deal of difference to the men of the German opposition.

In order to show that these are not simply reflections arrived at twenty-five years after the events concerned I may perhaps quote from a letter which I wrote to Mr. Allan Dulles in Berne after having had another conversation with Adam in January 1943. I said:

"Thus the question to be faced in political warfare seems to be this one: are the United Nations willing to say to the opposition (in Germany): if

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you succeed in overthrowing Hitler and if you then prove by your acts (punishment of Nazi-leaders and Nazi-criminals, liberation of occupied territory, restoration of stolen goods, instauration of a régime which respects the rights of man, participation in economic and social reconstruction) that you have wholly broken with national socialism and militarism, we will be ready to discuss peace-terms with you. As long as that is not clearly and definitely said the process of development of an anti-Western, anti-liberal complex is likely to go on. And as long as that is not said, large groups in Germany who are psychologically prepared to join the opposition, will remain hesitant and wonder whether after all Hitler is not a lesser evil than total military defeat."

How MUST WE understand Adam von Trott's attitude? Should we consider him as a man whose mind was divided between a typical German nationalism and an attachment to the Western liberal democratic world? I do not think so. He was certainly a patriot in that he loved his country, but he had nothing to do with the traditional German nationalism with its narrowness and its reactionary content. Adam belonged to a new world which cannot be adequately described in the old terms. He was a visionary and it is not surprising that a man of the older generation, Ulrich von Hassell, spoke of his "theoretical-illusionistic conception of the world" (von Hassell, *Vom anderen Deutschland*, p. 215). Adam thought in international categories. For him the war was a civil war within Western civilisation. His tremendous disappointment was that those in England and America whom he considered as his allies in this war did not accept him as a comrade-in-arms. Did they not understand that men all over the world were involved in the same predicament? National Socialism was a judgment upon our whole modern civilisation. It had to be overcome not by a simple return to the liberal-democratic Western tradition but by a radical and revolutionary reform of society. Margaret Boveri puts it very clearly: "The *Kreisauer Kreis* (to which Trott belonged) did not want to go back to Weimar, nor to go forward to Bonn (if something like Bonn could have been imagined at that time). . . ."

It seems to me that this fundamental aspect of Trott's philosophy has not received sufficient emphasis in Mr. Sykes' biography from which I have learned much. If Adam was often so critical of British and American policies this was not so much due to a national reaction as to his conviction that the Western nations did not understand the depth of the crisis of our whole civilisation and tried to apply outworn methods to unprecedented situations. He really belonged to that wider European resistance movement which was dreaming of the great renewal of Europe through radical social reform and new federal structures. The task to build that kind of Europe is still before us.

W. A. VISSER 'T HOOFT

Geneva

## Overlooking Historical Facts

THE ARTICLES by Mr. Christopher Sykes in *ENCOUNTER* (December 1968) entitled "Heroes and Suspects" and of Mr. David Astor in its June issue on "Why the Resistance against Hitler Was Ignored" throw much light on the failure of the German opposition (with one notable exception) to reach an understanding with the British government. Particularly Mr. Sykes raises more questions than can be dealt with properly in my own comment.

Much that is said by Mr. Sykes reflects his effort to render justice to the men of the military resistance and their more immediate civilian allies. He wonders why the German resisters should be an exception to the veneration usually accorded to "leaders of forlorn hopes." In answer he emphasises quite correctly that theirs alone of the Resistance movements of World War II failed, "completely and calamitously." The numerous conspiracies, he points out, made no discernible difference to the military operations of both sides. However true this may be, it would have been well to show how *earnestly* and at what *great risk* they tried to influence the course of events in ways beneficial to the Allied war efforts. It was hardly their fault that the innumerable messages of warning which were dispatched by them and in most cases reached their addressees made so little impact.

The repeated warnings given the Dutch and Belgians on Hitler's attack plans of 1939-40—the messages sent to the Dutch, Danes, Norwegians, British, and to the Pope concerning the invasion of Scandinavia—the warning to Yugoslavia, and those sent to the Soviet Union via American government channels—all are beyond controversy. For readers possibly unfamiliar with what I have stated here, let it be emphasised that all of it rests on evidence derived from non-German sources, such as the reports of the Belgian military attaché, the testimony of his Dutch colleague before the Netherlands Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry, the reports of the French ambassador to the Holy See, the memoirs of Secretary of State Cordell Hull, and a Vatican record (cited on page 351 of my book on *The Conspiracy Against Hitler in the Twilight War*) which reflects the personal testimony of Pius XII. It is true that the sources of such warnings were not always identified to their recipients. We do not know, for example, to what extent this was done by Pro-Secretary of State Montini (the present Paul VI) when he informed the French and British embassies on 7 May 1940 of the German attack which came three days later. I am not concerned in this discussion, however, with any contemporary failure to give credit where it was due, but rather with the judgment of a posterity to which the facts are known or easily ascertainable.

HAROLD C. DEUTSCH is Professor of History at the University of Minnesota and author of the scholarly study, *The Conspiracy against Hitler in the Twilight War* (1968).

## The Prague Manifesto of 22 May

WE WANT to bring the present parlous state of our national science, culture and journalism to the attention of our colleagues. We, scientists, artists and journalists, must explain what it is we are doing and what it is we wish to defend. We are scions of an educated people, to whom we are bound by a common history and mother-tongue. For this reason we appeal also to our fellow-citizens, assuring them that we too share a common concern for freedom, for the fate of our nation, for the truths of socialism.

It is the task of culture to study and to create, to extend knowledge and to bring happiness. To this task we shall remain true—under favourable or unfavourable circumstances. In this sense, culture is the very life-blood of a nation; if it ceases to flow, the nation must die. We seek the truth. We do not oppose ourselves to received truths, but see precisely in their clarification our appointed task. To seek the truth and to fight for it is equivalent, for us, to seeking freedom and fighting for it. For us the pursuit of truth and the pursuit of freedom are inseparable. Freedom cannot be legislated; it is not a gift, but a task.

Freedom of creative expression, the independence of science and of public opinion—these are things that have to be fought for again and again. It falls to us to overcome the obstacles that power-interests and lack of vision have put in our way. Needless to say: the greater the obstacles, the greater the moral challenge.

AT THIS MOMENT, fundamental cultural rights are in peril. Much that we have long taken for granted is in question. False goals are being imposed on us from above.

We are witnesses of an untruthful representation of events in the past and in the present. Certain persons who have shown in the past, not loyalty, but merely a readiness to conform, are emerging again in the most shameless manner—people who showed not ability but rather ignorance of their field, who served not the truth but the powers that be. And not only our culture is in peril. The suppression of freedom of expression means the suppression of all human rights and of every kind of freedom. As long as the administration of public affairs is in the hands of people who have proved themselves, over the years, incapable of solving the political and economic problems of the country, we see no guarantee for the self-respect and security of future generations.

WE ARE TOLD that science, the arts and journalism belong to the State, and that therefore the State has the right to control them. But just as the soil belongs to the peasants, and the factories to the workers, the newspapers ought to belong to those who read them, radio, films and television to those who enjoy them, and science and the arts to those who make use of them. Our culture is the property not of the State, but of the people.

We are going through difficult days. Our courage, our steadfastness, our intellectual integrity are on trial. We would wish to face this test with our honour unsullied in the eyes, not only of our fellow-citizens, but in the questioning, inexorable scrutiny of future generations.

The measures being taken against the free life of the arts grow stricter every day. We shall resist this process as far as it is possible. As long as our organisations are in the hands of duly elected officials, we can depend upon them not to compromise the principles they have been elected to defend. None among us intends to betray his colleagues, and thus himself.

WE CAN, OF COURSE, be silenced. But we cannot be forced to say things we do not believe. We can be deprived of our freedom of expression. But we cannot be deprived of our inner, spiritual freedom, and of our self-respect. The criterion of action remains intellectual integrity; loyalty and honour remain the criteria of humanity.

The representatives of Czech culture intend to remain true to their ideals and to all that they have achieved in the past in the spirit of free inquiry—true to their language, their national traditions, their people. Since they do not intend to withdraw from free and creative activity, they will face whatever tests the future brings and work on, following their consciences, despite the evils of the times.

We say this, publicly, and with all due emphasis.

MANIFESTO issued in Prague on the 22nd of May, by 274 elected representatives of Czech professional organisations of scientists, artists, and journalists meeting in the Prague Film Club on Jungmann Square. Its publication in Czechoslovakia has been forbidden by the government of the new Party Secretary Gustav Husak.

MUCH HAS BEEN SAID of the national outlook of the military conspirators and their conservative civilian allies, culminating often in the charge that "what they wanted was Hitler's gains without Hitler." Mr. Sykes shares this view to some extent and, no doubt, most of them took the usual German view about the need of revising the Treaty of Versailles. But there should also be stress on the sharp parting of the ways between them and the Führer on his indiscriminate expansionism to acquire "living space." It also deserves to be noted that many of them by 1939 can be classed as "repentant nationalists" who had come to perceive to what unrestrained nationalism could lead.

Students of the military conspiracies against Hitler are well aware of their failings, and much that Mr. Sykes says in criticism of them is legitimate. It is not quite correct to state that, save for Rommel, they never included a general commanding large bodies of troops. He himself mentions Witzleben. There are also Hammerstein (for a very brief period), Kluge, and Leeb, who, though unaware of a specific plot, had declared his readiness to join an action against the régime. Nor is it fair to say that whenever Hitler issued his aggressive orders, the generals were prepared to "do their duty." In September 1938 they were certainly ready to follow Beck's lead on refusing to march against Czechoslovakia. They also assuredly failed to "do their duty" when they did not report the treasonable proposals made even to such unlikely personages as Reichenau and Guderian.

As regards the higher command levels generally, Mr. Sykes seems to me if anything too lenient. The truly damning indictment against them is their submission to Hitler's criminal occupation régime in Poland about which they were fully or at least adequately informed. In contrast to their more nebulous role in the later genocide against the Jews, the record here is crystal-clear, notably in their dastardly desertion of General Blaskowitz in the confrontation with Himmler on 17 March 1940.

There is little to add to Mr. Astor's presentation of the reasons why the only hope of a successful coup in September 1938 lay in Britain making clear that it would not tolerate an attack on Czechoslovakia. He agrees that the one-sided strictures of opposition survivors against British policy are out of place. Certainly the defensive attitude of so many British writers on this point is fully understandable. What does astound one is that they never highlight and frequently do not mention the one occasion when London (in the Vatican exchanges of 1939-40) went all the way in generous response to Opposition overtures. Can this strange reticence spring from fear that acknowledgement of this momentous step would weaken the British case on earlier and later instances when the policy was a different one? If so, this sensitiveness seems unnecessary, for the failure of the German Army chiefs to act even under this goad is the best defence of the usual British view that there was too little prospect of a successful coup to build a British policy on it.

HAROLD C. DEUTSCH

University of Minnesota

## AUTHORS

WE REGRET that the author's note on **Ben Morreale** was inadvertently omitted last month. The author of that remarkable report on "Down & Out on the American Campus" writes of himself: "I'm now teaching French History at one of the ten or eleven units of the New York State University system. I'm at Plattsburgh, a unit of 4 or 5 thousand students (we are one of the smallest). . . . How I've come here could be a long story, but I'm afraid I haven't got the disposition or the temperament to tell you how really exciting and adventurous it has all been: I've read too much Orwell, spent too much time in Sicily, and I've read too much in the history of the French Revolution, all of which has given me an eye for disaster which no doubt is reflected in my piece. If there's any brightness in it, it is no doubt due to my Sicilian father. . . ."

"I was born in New York City in 1924 and educated there. I spent 3 years in the Pacific during the War, then continued my studies at the University of Paris where I received a *Doctorat* (thesis on the French Revolution) and where I lived for about 7 years. I started writing there and I've published in various magazines from the *Paris Review* to *Les Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française*. I've published a novel on Sicily, *The Seventh Saracen* (New York, Coward McCann; London, Gollancz, 1959). I might remind you that I did a piece for *ENCOUNTER* [June 1957] on Danilo Dolci before he was too well known in England. . . ."

"At the moment I'm working on a book entitled *The Rebel and The Aristocrat* (Tom Paine and Gouverneur Morris): *Two Character Studies in Revolution*. Well, my idea being that today's argument first began with these men and in their times. . . ."

As we go to press with the **T. W. Adorno** interview (p. 63), we learn with deep regret of the death of Professor Adorno in Switzerland, on 6th August, at the age of 65. . . .

**George Woodcock**, born in Winnipeg in 1912, lived in England until 1949. He was a close friend of George Orwell, with whom he collaborated in many socialist and anarchist activities. His biography of Proudhon was published in 1956. Among his other books are *William Godwin* (1946), *The Writer and Politics* (1948), and *Kropotkin: The Anarchist Prince* (1950). . . .

**Rayner Heppenstall** was a feature-writer and producer with the B.B.C. from 1945-65. His works include novels, poetry and literary criticism. He has written on *Leon Bloy* (Barrie & Rockliff, 1962) and *Raymond Roussel* (Calder & Boyars, 1966); his autobiography, *Portrait of the Artist as a Professional Man* (Peter Owen), and his latest novel, *The Shearers* (Hamish Hamilton) were published earlier this year.

# Encounter

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# A Curious Triangle

*Freud, Lou Andreas-Salomé, & Victor Tausk*

WHEN Lou Andreas-Salomé came into Freud's circle in 1912, she was bound to represent an acquisition for Freud personally, as well as for psycho-analysis. As Nietzsche's friend and expositor, she came to Freud with the aura of past European culture. Lou was still on close terms with Rilke, whose lover she had been and whose development as a poet she had assisted; together they had taken a trip to Russia, where they made Tolstoy's acquaintance. (Lou introduced Rilke to Freud in 1913, and Freud once wrote a short paper about the meeting.<sup>1</sup>)

Freud was fifty-six and Lou fifty-one when she came to Vienna in 1912; she regarded it as "the turning-point" in her life.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps not entirely by chance, Freud also later wrote that 1912 had been "the very climax of my psycho-analytic work."<sup>3</sup> Before entering the Viennese psycho-analytic scene, she prepared herself by reading everything Freud had written. She came with the intention of eliciting Freud's interest in her, and succeeded completely in her aim.

Lou fits the genre of women who have a knack for collecting great men. Madame de Staël in the 18th century and Alma Mahler in the 20th illustrate the type. In Lou's case beauty was not her main attraction; whatever her earlier good looks, she now had to rely on her psychological resources to arouse the attention of any potential conquests. Vibrantly responsive to ideas, Lou possessed an extraordinary talent for identifying with men, and especially with creative intellectuals often subject to inner uncertainties. So of course she would have read all of Freud before approaching him. Lou was useful to her series of great men, but as men fell in love with her, they eventually discovered that she had not truly given of herself: she had mirrored them, had

helped in their creative needs, but had withheld herself as a person. Her great men all needed her, but each of her lovers ultimately realised how she had eluded them.

Many years later Freud wrote that he had admired Lou immensely and been very attached to her "without a trace of sexual attraction."<sup>4</sup> Puritanical by temperament, and head of a family of six children, for Freud a physical relationship with Lou was out of the question if only because he could never have tolerated the degree of disorder such an affair would entail. Freud was always moved by the great charm of what he called narcissistic women. Through Lou, Freud was in touch with the spirit of Nietzsche and much of the best of German cultural life. Freud later began to honour his favoured pupils by presenting them with an antique stone to be made into a ring; although he never did this for Lou, he took her into his confidence to an extraordinary degree. In his letters of later years he discussed with her the emotional problems of his daughter Anna. For a time in the 1920s Lou became Anna's psycho-analytic therapist. Freud asked Lou to help loosen Anna's ties to him; but Lou refused.<sup>5</sup> They discussed Anna together almost as if his wife did not matter at all, as if Anna were their child instead. Lou responded with all her devotion, later dedicating one of her books to Anna Freud.

Freud certainly had no special fondness for women with a checkered sexual past. But in 1912 he courted Lou. Her *Journal* records him sending her flowers, and walking her home at 2.30 in the morning. These attentions are all the more noteworthy from a man who husbanded his time jealously. Lou succeeded in making Freud fall in love with her, although in a sublimated way. When she missed a lecture

PAUL ROAZEN is the author of the recently published study of "Freud: Political and Social Thought" (Knopf, N.Y., and Hogarth Press, London). He teaches at Harvard University, and is now completing a comprehensive work on Freud and his circle of friends and colleagues.

<sup>1</sup> "On Transcience," in Freud, *Standard Edition*, ed. Strachey (1953), vol. 14, pp. 305-7.

<sup>2</sup> Andreas-Salomé, *The Freud Journal* (1964), p. 131.

<sup>3</sup> "An Autobiographical Study," *Standard Edition*, vol. 20, p. 72.

<sup>4</sup> Ernest Jones, *Life and Work of Freud*, vol. III (1957), p. 213.

<sup>5</sup> Rudolf Binion, *Frau Lou* (1968), pp. 372-3.



of his, he felt uneasy. Freud had immediately grown used to speaking for Lou: as he wrote to her, "I have acquired the bad habit of directing my lecture to a particular person in the audience, and yesterday I stared as if spellbound at the vacant chair reserved for you. . . ."

In these pre-World War I days, before his cancer and all the disappointments with his pupils, Freud was at his most inspiring. In addition to the regular members of his Society, some well-known people came to meetings. At the height of his powers, Freud was constantly reformulating his ideas; he flourished on contacts with richly endowed human beings. Lou noticed that Freud did not care for cats or dogs. When we consider how in his old age he turned to chows for emotional sustenance, her observation suggests how much more open to human communication he was at this earlier time. He would go to cafés after scientific meetings, amplifying the issues of his lectures in discussion, always exploring possibilities.

LOU WAS IN a special position to understand Freud and his whole circle. For she had actively set out to seduce Victor Tausk whom she ranked "the most prominently outstanding" among Freud's students. Tausk was a dashing Slav whose dynamism and good looks won the hearts of a whole series of women, yet his marriage had ended in failure and successive love affairs came to grief. A man of great versatility, a poet and a writer, a lawyer as well as a physician and psycho-analyst, Tausk was ultimately overwhelmed by his contact with Freud. In 1912, however, Tausk was the most brilliant of Freud's pupils in Vienna. He was handsome, with blond hair, blue eyes, and a moustache. At thirty-three he was eighteen years her junior, and to his friends it was strange, if not offensive, to see him involved with a woman so much older.

Lou came to Vienna flaunting her attractiveness to great men as a vehicle by which present lovers might liken themselves to the famous lovers in her past. While she was in search of talented men to identify with, Tausk could hope that being accepted as Lou's lover might help make him to psychology what Nietzsche was to philosophy and Rilke to poetry. One would think that Tausk, so enormously attractive to women, could have easily found a younger and more single-mindedly devoted woman; but Lou's very self-sufficiency, her skill at pulling out of love affairs at the opportune moment, was a special source of her attractiveness to

him. Afraid of being depended upon and loved, Tausk need never feel guilty about Lou.

Lou and Tausk shared many interests in common. Tausk got her into a clinic to observe some cases. He brought her a collection of Serbian ballads he had translated, and she accompanied him on his visits to his two sons, who lived with their mother in Vienna. But on Tausk's part his love for Lou ended in physical revulsion and distaste.

For the year 1912-13, however, Freud, Lou, and Tausk established a triangle which had advantages for each. Lou had recurrently had two men in her life simultaneously. She married Friedrich Carl Andreas after he threatened to kill himself; but she slept only with other men. Before Lou married she had used another man against Nietzsche (Nietzsche's sister considered her a devil.) Lou, Rilke, and Andreas travelled to Russia as a threesome. And now she had a physical relation with Tausk, alongside her deep involvement with Freud.

For Freud the arrangement had frustrations as well as satisfactions. He was jealous of Tausk's opportunity to have an affair with Lou. Tausk was much younger, more virile, and altogether a larger man physically; Freud had already acquired his scholar's stoop. When Freud stared spellbound at Lou's vacant chair, she may well have been with Tausk. On the other hand, Lou could give Freud information about Tausk, and she could help keep this potentially troublesome student under control.

Meanwhile, Tausk had taken Lou at least partly out of identification with Freud; Tausk was certainly glad to play the role of the great man who was currently her lover. Just as Freud was jealous of Tausk's relation to Lou, so Tausk envied what Freud could mean to her. Lou could serve as a channel from Tausk to Freud, raising Tausk's importance in Freud's eyes. For both men she was a buffer.

THE VIENNESE psycho-analytic group was beset by competitiveness for Freud's admiration, and petty jealousies and backbiting are bound to arise in any hothouse atmosphere. To be an analyst then meant to be a pariah in psychiatry. Having given up the quest for approval in the external world, Freud's pupils needed his favour in exchange. Freud provided the inspiration, and, more mundanely, the patients. These apostles gave all their devotion to Freud and turned their hostilities on to the outside world. His believers followed whatever Freud was then working on,

without daring to stray very far from the legitimate borders he defined. The Psycho-analytic Society had an air of secrecy. Political or religious imagery can best convey the atmosphere of those early meetings. As Tausk put it, "Darwinism... was a scientific religion, just as psycho-analysis is."<sup>6</sup> If Freud reigned as God, it was his students who made his word law.

Freud, to be sure, encouraged the absolute devotion of his students. Hated and maligned, he was entitled to entice followers by exaggerating the degree to which his supporters were an embattled minority. Freud gave regular lectures before heterogeneous audiences at the university on Saturday evenings, to which his students came with spouses or lady-friends; he limited his audiences by requiring them to get his express permission to attend beforehand. But still Freud preferred speaking in his small group of dedicated followers. He was so self-critical about his ideas that he very much needed a "yes" from the outside world. Since this recognition did not yet come from the world at large, or even from Vienna's intelligentsia, approval had to come from his own little Society.

So Freud collected able people who would in effect be yea-sayers: they were the audience for which he wrote. He wanted them to mirror back his ideas, to help him see his concepts in a slightly different light; but he did not want to be jolted out of a line of thinking already embarked upon. Even if original ideas were brought by others as a sign of their positive relation to Freud, these might seem to him like a hostile attack. "What he wanted was to look into a kaleidoscope lined with mirrors that would multiply the images he introduced into it."<sup>7</sup>

As a woman, Lou would arouse none of Freud's feelings of rivalry: for such an old-fashioned man women simply did not exist as competitors. He wanted corroborators rather than collaborators, and Lou fitted perfectly into such a passive role. She could flatter him while believing everything she said; and as a woman she could take a special delight in pleasing this man. A woman can more easily dissociate her sense of self from her professional work; so to give Freud what he wanted in no way compromised her integrity.

Freud's demand that his students identify with him would eventually mobilise rebellion

in men. For a man really to be like Freud meant finally for him to be original: yet originality ended his usefulness to Freud. On the other hand, for a woman like Lou to reflect Freud's ideas back to him fitted in perfectly with her feminine ability to identify with creative men. But for one man to flatter another can be corrupting, and the best of Freud's male pupils left because the atmosphere was too narrow and ultimately dispiriting.

SOME HAVE LIKENED Freud and his circle to a reigning monarch with a court, an obvious comparison for those who lived under the absolute monarchy of the Hapsburg Empire. Freud certainly had this much significance for them all. His pupils were his subjects, owing fealty to him alone; they performed tasks, wrote articles, expounded his ideas. And yet often Freud did not respect them because they lacked independence. Another image which has been used by analysts who lived through those days is that of a large and extended family, with Freud as the unquestioned head. In these terms Freud needed his pupils as adopted sons, to escape isolation and to establish his immortality. Both images imply that if the pupil were not respectful toward the leader and his ideas, he would be in danger of being ousted. Very often the followers were more stringent than Freud in interpreting the permissible range of thinking.

Lou captured this whole atmosphere in one tiny vignette in her diary; her involuted sentences repay the closest attention. Early in her stay she reported a meeting at which Freud tried to counter Jung's influence on psycho-analytic thinking. Freud argued that Jung's term "complex" was unnecessary. ("Complexes" then referred to what we now call "emotional conflicts.") According to Lou, Freud

showed a subtle and ingenious bit of malice in his attempt to make the term "complex" superfluous, pointing out how it had insinuated itself into the terminology out of convenience, without having grown up on psychoanalytic soil, just as Dionysus was artificially exalted from being an exotic god to becoming the son of Zeus. (At this, Tausk, who was sitting or standing next to Freud, and was still in the white doctor's smock he wore coming from the psychiatric clinic, did not quite stifle a chuckle.)<sup>8</sup>

Both Lou and Tausk obviously understood the undercurrents of Freud's comment. He was likening himself to an immortal god capable of conferring divine favours or withdrawing them from an artificially created son.

If Jung were not to be Freud's successor, then

<sup>6</sup> *Minutes of the Vienna Psycho-analytic Society* (ed. Nunberg/Federn), vol. II (1967), p. 467.

<sup>7</sup> Fritz Wittels, *Sigmund Freud* (1924), p. 134.

<sup>8</sup> Andreas-Salomé, *The Freud Journal*, p. 134.

Tausk might yearn for recognition. Even if Tausk did not expect to be accepted quite yet as Freud's most beloved son, he might well have seen himself as the future recipient of royal favours once the defecting barons were driven out. Supporting Freud in his quarrel with Alfred Adler, Tausk displayed a degree of malice that Lou considered excessive and unfair. And at the height of Freud's public battle with Jung, Tausk thundered against Jung's heresy. "Clever and dangerous," Lou reports Freud saying about Tausk, "he can bark and bite." Tausk had indeed an aggressive mouth; his beautiful teeth were a prominent part of his face, especially when he smiled. And in these verbal battles Tausk was at his best, though in his articles he could also be truculent and polemical. As Freud commented in an obituary praising Tausk, "his passionate temperament found expression in sharp, and sometimes too sharp, criticisms. . . ."<sup>9</sup>

In listening to Tausk lecture on psycho-analysis, Lou had the impression "not only of classical Freudian theory but also of an unusually loving and reverent approach to the essential discoveries of Freud. . . ." She objected only that Tausk was "too precisely Freudian; in any case, he is never likely to be reproached with the contrary." Lou felt that for Tausk's own good his identification with Freud should not descend to imitation. The first to give lectures on psycho-analysis for the lay public, Tausk could repeat Freud word for word. Freud himself was a great orator; but the more Tausk felt impelled to ape Freud, the less of a personality in his own right he became.

LOU FELT WITH THE lightest possible touch just exactly the sources of tension between these two men. Tausk had only been in Freud's circle for a few short years before he became a rival in Freud's eyes. Ellen Delp, a woman of doubtful sexual allegiance who was an intimate friend of Lou's, looked on Tausk as "a genius of Freud's own stature bearing up loyally under Freud's jealous provocation."

What put Freud off? Lou reported that in a discussion after one of Tausk's papers, "Freud's rejoinders were more severe than usual and yet no other person presents his papers to him with such evident reverence. I think that Tausk is of all the most unconditionally devoted to Freud. . . ."

<sup>9</sup> "Victor Tausk," *Standard Edition*, vol. 17, p. 275.

<sup>10</sup> Hanns Sachs, *Freud, Master and Friend* (1945), p. 69.

In a few areas Tausk was forging ahead of Freud. For example, he wanted to extend psycho-analytic thinking to the psychology of the artist. He delivered an early paper on sublimation, focusing on the role of inhibitions in artistic creativity. This would one day be considered a perfectly legitimate subject among analysts, but in 1912 Freud felt that "with the persistent calumny of our whole movement on the part of official science, we should not dare to move so boldly into new territory leaving the rear so exposed, and confirmation of earlier discoveries needs to be made again and again. . . ." After this meeting Lou noted Freud's conflict with "independent, or temperamental characters."

Freud characteristically wished to transcend all previous limits of knowledge. Yet when it came to Tausk, Freud thought he was seizing problems ahead of their time. In his obituary, Freud noted Tausk's gift for exploring the philosophic implications of psycho-analysis. Once again, though, Freud hesitated. "Perhaps the time was not yet ripe for laying such general foundations as these for the young science of psycho-analysis." Tausk, according to Freud, had an "impetuous urge for investigation."

When Freud was submerged in following a theme of his own, he would push aside anything that interfered with it. As his earliest biographer (Wittels) noted, "he finds it a nuisance when lights other than his own are thrown athwart his path, or when others try to push him forward or to divert him from his chosen course. Whenever necessary he erects outworks to cut off inconvenient crosslights." Tausk's interests were disturbances to Freud. Tausk pursued fields where Freud thought the way would be blocked, and under those circumstances he soon lost interest.

In contrast to Tausk's universalistic aspirations, Freud believed in the single-minded pursuit of research. The only way to make important discoveries, he thought, was to "have one's ideas exclusively focused on one central interest."<sup>10</sup> In part Freud was reacting to the diversity of his own youth. He recorded in his autobiographical study how "In complete contrast to the diffuse character of my studies during my earlier years at the University, I... [developed] an inclination to concentrate my work on a single subject. . . ." Freud admitted his contribution to psychology was one-sided: he claimed only to have unearthed the importance of unconscious motivation, other motives being

commonplace. Defending his own narrowness, Freud thought that he "must have needed this one-sidedness in order to see what remains hidden from others."<sup>11</sup>

TAUSK'S WORK irritated Freud, and a good part of the problem was Tausk's originality. Lou and Freud talked it out repeatedly, while she was still engaged in her affair with Tausk. In her diary Lou mentioned having supper at Freud's: "Earlier in the living room he turned the conversation to Tausk and we talked a lot about him; the same later in his study and it was nearly half past one when he took me home. . . ." On another evening Lou wrote that "before supper, and then again later, Freud talked readily and at length about the Tausk problem. At the end he spoke kindly and tenderly. . . ." Evidently this spiritual *ménage-à-trois* arrangement was accepted quite naturally by them all.

Tausk's independence disturbed Freud. He recognised brilliance, admired creativity, but in his immediate circle he needed passive receptacles for his concepts. At this stage Freud was still trying to keep his best students. He hoped to reconcile psycho-analysis's need for first-rate adherents with his own manner of working out his ideas. But Tausk's talents upset Freud's inner harmony. Lou reported after one of the Society's meetings that

Freud acts with complete conviction when he proceeds so sharply against Tausk. But . . . bearing in mind Tausk's original neurotic disposition . . . it is also clear that any independence around Freud, especially when it is marked by aggression and display of temperament, worries him and wounds him quite automatically in his noble egoism as investigator, forcing him to premature discussion. . . .<sup>12</sup>

Freud resented Tausk's intellectual ambitiousness, preferring men like Otto Rank who, according to Lou, was at that time "a son and nothing but a son." Of Rank, Freud said to Lou: "Why is it that there can't be six such charming men in our group instead of only one?" As Lou shrewdly noted, in Freud's wish for half-a-dozen Ranks "the individuality of the man referred to is put in some doubt."

The crux of "the Tausk problem" was not just that he was a son striving to grow up; for Tausk's independence was partly a façade. His inhibitions in being fully creative made the situation with Freud acute. For worst of all,

from Freud's point of view, was that at times Tausk stayed glued to Freud's own preoccupations. In an uncanny way Tausk seemed able to anticipate Freud's own formulations; hence Lou's reference to Tausk's forcing Freud to "premature discussion." Freud felt uneasy with Tausk not just because he had a mind of his own, but also because he dared to use this talent on problems which mattered so very dearly to Freud himself. One passage in Lou's *Journal* conveys Freud's distress:

In the afternoon after Tausk had finished the lecture . . . we drove to the meeting. I went on ahead and walked with Freud, who was waiting for me in the street. He was restless (on account of the closeness of the ideas to his own), questioned me during the lecture, passing a note to me: "Does he know all about it already?"<sup>13</sup>

Here lay the centre of Freud's difficulties with Tausk; and Freud's distress that Tausk might steal some of his ideas before Freud himself had quite finished with them also helps explain why Lou could be useful to Freud in relation to Tausk. Freud could count on her to keep him informed about Tausk's work, just as he could be sure on whose side she would ultimately come down. Freud felt uncomfortable with someone like Tausk around, a man bright enough even to anticipate some of Freud's own concepts. Freud did not like the uncertainty that Tausk might have an idea before Freud himself; and it bothered Freud to have to acknowledge Tausk's contributions.

THE SITUATION, HOWEVER, never got beyond Freud's control. Ultimately Freud could afford to brush Tausk off completely. But for Tausk the whole conflict with Freud touched close to the centre of his being. Lou was sensitive enough to see it all from the perspective of Tausk's inner difficulties:

Only now do I perceive the whole tragedy of Tausk's relation with Freud: that is, I realise now that he will always tackle the same problems, the same attempts at solution, that Freud is engaged in. That is no accident, but signifies his "making himself a son" as violently as he "hates the father for it." As if by a thought transference he will always be busy with the same thing as Freud, never taking one step aside to make room for himself.

Lou knew enough about Tausk to understand how much he was one of those psycho-analysts who "stand themselves in practical need of the method they profess." However she greatly exaggerated the degree to which Tausk could only follow along in Freud's footsteps; for at this

<sup>11</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Letters* (1961), pp. 313-14.

<sup>12</sup> *The Freud Journal*, pp. 97-8. <sup>13</sup> P. 114.

time Tausk was already making thoroughly original contributions by pioneering the application of psycho-analytic insights to the understanding of psychoses. (Freud held himself at some distance from psychotic clinical problems, restricting his work to the less severely disturbed, to neurotics.) Lou was right, however, that Tausk was self-absorbed and introspective, excessively ambitious and yet passionately loyal to Freud. The situation was in fact such that Tausk could place all the blame on Freud for their mutual difficulties.

Lou recognised the extent to which Tausk's troubles came from within his own discordant soul. "What he wants is his blind and dumb self-expression, suffering so greatly as he does under the burden of himself." Tausk clung to Freud partly out of his own lack of inner resources. No matter how brilliant and independent he might be, somewhere he did have a "gap in creativity," which became "filled by identification with the other (son-ship) which constantly begets the illusion of having attained the anticipated position." Tausk could be profound in his psychological understanding of others as a displacement of "his own longing to be analysed himself," and so at times to be as self-deceptive as anyone.

Lou loved in Tausk his helplessness before his inner being, his tortured struggle to use his intellect to master his passions. He was demanding, but his capacity to have illusions made him lovable. His self, however, remained the prisoner of the past. In Tausk, she wrote,

there still remain those irreconcilable contradictions between that which Freud calls the "beast of prey" (which at least helps him in the practical management of life) and his own oversensitivity to the point of self-dissolution. It is all so painful to behold that one would like to look the other way and run away. In the long run no helpful relationship is possible; there can be none when reality is cluttered by the wraiths of unabreacted primal reminiscences. An impure tone resonates through everything, buzzing as it were with murmurings from within.

Yet from the very beginning I realised it was this very struggle in Tausk that most deeply moved me—the struggle of the human creature. Brother-animal. You.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *The Freud Journal*, pp. 167–8. The concept "beast of prey" comes from Freud's essay "On Narcissism," *Standard Edition*, vol. 14, p. 89.

<sup>15</sup> The when, wherefore, and how of this decision is discussed in my *Brother Animal: the story of Freud and Tausk* (Knopf, N.Y., and forthcoming Penguin Books, London).

<sup>16</sup> "Victor Tausk," *Standard Edition*, p. 275.

TAUSK WENT ON to do creative work as a psycho-analyst; in our own time both Bruno Bettelheim and Erik Erikson, for example, have built upon Tausk's prior contributions to ego psychology. In his quite original work with psychotic patients, Tausk was the first to formulate the important concept of "ego boundaries"; and he was also the first to introduce the term "identity" into psycho-analytic literature, in his paper on the "influencing machine" in schizophrenia. But the first World War uprooted Tausk from his medical practice, and when he came back from the war seeking Freud's help, the master put him off with finality. In 1919, six years after his affair with Lou and after having been decisively rejected by Freud, a lifetime's troubles came to fruition in Tausk's decision to kill himself.<sup>15</sup>

Lou, already embarked on her career as a practising psycho-analyst, exchanged letters with Freud about Tausk's sudden end. Regrettably, as in the case of all Freud's correspondence, selected passages have been censored from the published version of their final comments on Tausk. Freud wrote the official obituary, the lengthiest he ever penned, in honour of Tausk:

No one . . . could escape the impression that here was a man of importance.<sup>16</sup>

The immediate circumstances of Tausk's death, including a suicide note to the master, were electrifying to the members of Freud's inner circle. To kill oneself after a quarrel with Freud was to enact one of the most fearful expectations of Freud's followers: to cross Freud meant to run the risk of being destroyed, of having the candle snuffed out and the book slammed shut.

In Tausk's instance he was quite extinguished. The closing sentence of Freud's obituary has become ironic, for he had proclaimed that Tausk was "sure of an honourable memory in the history of psycho-analysis and its earliest struggles." Neither Lou nor Freud ever wrote of Tausk again, and the rest of Freud's circle, trying not to think about what had happened to their fallen friend, certainly did not.

By now Victor Tausk is an almost completely forgotten figure, with scarcely a place in history books. Still, Tausk's tale can help us to understand many of the other controversies in Freud's life, as the same pattern of conflicts recurred several times between Freud and his leading male pupils. The story also powerfully illustrates the timeless theme of how a man's struggle to liberate himself can end in his own undoing.

*Anna Kavan*

## World of Heroes

I TRY NOT to look at the stars. I can't bear to see them. They make me remember the time when I used to look at them and think, "I'm alive, I'm in love and I'm loved." I only really lived that part of my life. I don't feel alive now. I don't love the stars. They never loved me. I wish they wouldn't remind me of being loved.

I was slow in starting to live at all. It wasn't my fault. If there had ever been any kindness I would not have suffered from a delayed maturity. If so much apprehension had not been instilled into me, I shouldn't have been terrified to leave my solitary unwanted childhood in case something still worse was waiting ahead. However, there was no kindness. The nearest approach to it was being allowed to sit on the back seats of the big cars my mother drove about in with her different admirers. This was in fact no kindness at all. I was taken along to lend an air of respectability. The two in front never looked round or paid the slightest attention to me, and I took no notice of them. I sat for hours and hours and for hundreds of miles, inventing endless fantasies at the back of large and expensive cars.

The frightful slowness of a child's time. The interminable years of inferiority and struggling to win a kind word that is never spoken. The torment of self-accusation, thinking one must be to blame. The bitterness of longed-for affection bestowed on indifferent strangers. What future could have been worse? What could have been done to me to make me afraid to grow up out of such a childhood?

Later on, when I saw things more in proportion, I was always afraid of falling back into that ghastly black isolation of an uncomprehending, solitary, over-sensitive child, the worst fate I could imagine.

My mother disliked and despised me for being a girl. From her I got the idea that men were a superior breed, the free, the fortunate, the splendid, the strong. My small adolescent adventures and timid experiments confirmed this. All heroes were automatically masculine. Men were kinder than women; they could afford to be. They were also fierce, unpredictable, dangerous animals: one had to be constantly on guard against them.

My feeling for high-powered cars presumably came from her too. Periodically, ever since I can remember, the craving has come over me to drive and drive, from one country to another, in a fast car. Hearing people talk about danger and death on the roads seems ludicrous, laughable. To me, a big car is a very safe refuge, and the only means of escape from all the ferocious cruel forces lurking in life and in human beings. Its metal body surrounds me like magic armour, inside which I'm invulnerable. Everybody I meet in the outside world treats me in the same contemptuous, heartless way, discrediting what I do, refusing to admit my existence. Only the man in the car is different. Even the first time I drive with him, I feel that he appreciates, understands me; I know I can make him love me. The car is a small speeding substitute world, just big enough for us both. A sense of intimacy is

generated, a bond created between us: at once I start to love him a little. Occasionally it's the car I love first: the car can attract me to the man. When we are driving together, the three of us form one unit. We grow into each other. I forget about loneliness and inferiority, I feel fine.

In the outside world catastrophe always threatens. The news is always bad. Life tears into one like a mad rocket off course. The only hope of escaping is in a racing car.

AT LAST I REACHED the age of freedom and was considered adult; but still my over-prolonged adolescence made me look less than my age. X, a young American with a 2.6 Alfa Romeo and lots of money, took me for fifteen or sixteen. When I told him I was twenty-one, he burst out laughing, called me a case of retarded development, seemed to be making fun of me in a cruel way. I was frightened, ran away from him, travelled around with some so-called friends with whom I was hopelessly bored. After knowing X, they seemed insufferably dull, mediocre, conventional. Obsessed by longing for him and his car, I sent a telegram asking him to meet us. As soon as I'd done it, I grew feverish with excitement and dread, finally felt convinced the message would be ignored. How idiotic to invite such a crushing rejection. I should never survive the disappointment and shame.

I was shaking all over when we got to the place. It was evening. I kept in the shadows, kept my eyes down so as not to see him—not to see that he wasn't there. Then he was coming towards us. He shook hands with the others one by one, leaving me to the last. I thought: "He wants to humiliate me. He's no more interested in me than he is in them." Utterly miserable, I wanted to rush off and lose myself in the dark. Suddenly he said my name, said he was driving me to another town, said goodbye to the rest so abruptly that they seemed to stand there, suspended, amazed, for the instant before I forgot their existence. He had taken hold of my arm, and was walking me rapidly to his car, which looked half a mile long. He installed me in

the huge, docile, captivating machine, and we shot away, the stars spinning loops of white fire all over the sky as we raced along the deserted roads.

That was how it began. I always think gratefully of X, who introduced me to the world of heroes.

THE RACE TRACK justifies tendencies and behaviour which would be condemned as anti-social in other circumstances. Risks encountered nowhere else but in war are a commonplace of the racing drivers' existence. Knowing they may be killed any day, they live in a war-time atmosphere of recklessness, camaraderie, and heightened perception. The contrast of their light-hearted audacity and their sombre, sinister, menacing background gave them a personal glamour I found irresistible. They were all attractive to me, heroes, the bravest men in the world. Vaguely, I realised that they were also psychopaths, misfits, who played with death because they'd been unable to come to terms with life in the world. Their games could only end badly; few of them survived more than a few years. They were finished, anyhow, at thirty-five, when their reactions began to slow down, disqualifying them for the one thing they did so outstandingly well. They preferred to die before this happened.

Whether they lived or died, tragedy was waiting for them, only just round the corner, and the fact that they had so little time added to their attraction. It also united them in a peculiar, almost metaphysical way, as though something of all of them was in each individual. I thought of them as a sort of brotherhood, dedicated to their fatal profession of speed.

They all knew one another, met frequently, often lived in the same hotels. Their life was strictly nomadic. None of them had, or wanted to have, a place of his own to live in, even temporarily, far less a permanent home. The demands of their work made any kind of settled existence impossible. Only a few got married, and these marriages always came unstuck very quickly. The wives were

jealous of the group feeling, they could not stand the strain, the eternal separation, the homelessness.

I had never had a home, and, like the drivers, never wanted one. But wherever I stayed with them was my proper place, and I felt at home there. All my complicated emotions were shut inside hotel rooms, like boxes inside larger ones. A door, a window, a looking glass, impersonal walls. The door and the window opened only on things that had become unreal, the mirror only revealed myself. I felt enclosed, shut away from the world as I was in a car, safe in my retreat.

Although, after winning a race, they became for a short time objects of adulation and public acclaim, these men were not popular; the rest of humanity did not understand them. Their clannishness, their flippant remarks and casual manners were considered insulting; their unconventional conduct judged as immoral. The world seemed not to see either the careless elegance that appealed to me, or their strict aristocratic code, based on absolute loyalty to each other, absolute professional integrity, absolute fearlessness.

I LOVED THEM for being somehow above and apart from the general gregarious mass of mankind, born adventurers, with a breezy disrespect for authority. Perhaps they felt I was another misfit, a rebel too. Or perhaps they were intrigued or amused by the odd combination of my excessively youthful appearance and wholly pessimistic intelligence. At all events, they received me as no other social group could ever have done—conventions, families, finances would have prevented it. Straight away, they accepted my presence among them as perfectly natural, adopted me as a sort of mascot. They were regarded as wild, irresponsible dare-devils; but they were the only people I'd ever trusted. I was sure that, unlike all the others I'd known, they would not let me down.

Their code prohibited jealousy or any bad feeling. Unpleasant emotional situations did not arise. Finding that I was safe among them, I perceived that it was unnecessary to be on my guard any longer. Their attitude

was at the same time flattering and matter-of-fact. They were considerate, without any elaborate chivalry, which would have embarrassed me, and they displayed a frank, if restrained, physical interest, quite willing, apparently, to love me for as long or short a time as I liked. When my affair with *A* was over, I simply got into *B*'s car, and that was that. It all seemed exceedingly simple and civilised.

THE SITUATION was perfect for me. They gave me what I had always wanted but never had: a background, true friends. They were kind in their unsentimental race-track way, treated me as one of themselves, shared with me their life histories and their cynical jokes, listened to me with attention, but did not press me to talk. I sewed on buttons for them, checked hotel and garage accounts, acted as unskilled mechanic, looked after them if they were injured in crashes or caught influenza.

At last I felt wanted, valued, as I'd longed to be all my life. At last I belonged somewhere, had a place, was some use in the world. For the very first time I understood the meaning of happiness, and it was easy for me to be truly in love with each of them. I could hardly believe I wasn't dreaming. It was incredible: but it was true, it was really happening. I never had time now to think or to get depressed, I was always in a car with one of them. I went on all the long rallies, won *grand prix* races, acted as co-driver or passenger as the occasion required. I loved it all, the speed, the exhaustion, the danger. I loved rushing down icy roads at ninety miles an hour, spinning round three times, and continuing non-stop without even touching the banked-up snow.

This was the one beautiful period of my life, when I drove all over the world, saw all its countries. The affection of these men, who risked their lives so casually, made me feel gay and wonderfully alive, and I adored them for it. By liking me, they had made the impossible happen. I was living a real fairy tale.



THIS MIRACULOUS STATE of affairs lasted for several years, and might have gone on some time longer. But, beyond my euphoria, beyond the warm light-hearted atmosphere they generated between them, the sinister threat in the background was always waiting. Disaster loomed over them like a circle of icy mountains, implacably drawing nearer: they'd developed a special attitude in self-defence. Because crashes and constant danger made each man die many times, they spoke of death as an ordinary event, for which the carelessness or recklessness of the individual was wholly responsible. Nobody ever said, "Poor old Z's had it," but, "Z asked for it, the crazy bastard, never more than one jump ahead of the mortuary." Their jargon had a brutal sound to outsiders. But, by speaking derisively of the victim, they deprived death of terror, made it seem something he could easily have avoided.

Without conscious reflection, I took it for granted that, when the time came, I would die on the track, like my friends. And this very nearly happened. *G*, *H*, or *I*, or whoever was driving when the car crashed and turned four somersaults before it burst into flames, was killed instantly. I had the extreme bad luck to be dragged out of the blazing wreckage only three-quarters dead. Apparently my case was a challenge to the doctors of several hospitals, who, for the next two years, worked with obstinate persistence to save my life, while I persistently tried to discard it. I used to look in their cold, clinical eyes with loathing and helpless rage. They got their way in the end, and discharged me. I was pushed out again into the hateful world, alone, hardly able to walk, and disfigured by burns.

The drivers loyally kept in touch, wrote and sent presents to the hospitals, came to see me whenever they could. It was entirely my own fault that, as the months dragged on, the letters became fewer, the visits less and less frequent, until they finally ceased. I didn't want them to be sorry for me or to feel any obligation. I was sure my scarred face must repel them, so I deliberately drove them away.

I couldn't possibly go back to them: I had no heart, no vitality, for the life I'd so much enjoyed. I was no longer the gay, adventurous girl they had liked. All the same, if one of them had really exerted himself to persuade me, I might. . . . That nobody made this special effort, or showed a desire for further intimacy, confirmed my conviction that I had become repulsive. Although there was a possible alternative explanation. At the time of the crash, I had been in love with the man who was driving, and hadn't yet reached the stage of singling out his successor. So, as I was the one who always took the initiative, none of them had any cause to feel closer to me than the rest. Perhaps if I had indicated a preference. . . . But I was paralysed by the guilt of my survival, as certain they all resented my being alive as if I'd really caused their comrade's death.

WHAT CAN I do now? What am I to become? How can I live in this world I'm condemned to but can't endure? They couldn't stand it either, so they made a world of their own. They have each other's company, and they are heroes: whereas I'm quite alone, and have none of the qualities essential to heroism—the spirit, the toughness, the dedication. I'm back where I was as a child, solitary, helpless, unwanted, frightened.

It's so lonely, so terribly lonely. I hate being always alone. I so badly need someone to talk to, someone to love. Nobody looks at me now, and I don't want them to; I don't want to be seen. I can't bear to look at myself in the glass. I keep away from people as much as I can. I know everyone is repelled and embarrassed by all these scars.

There is no kindness left. The world is a cruel place full of men I shall never know, whose indifference terrifies me. If once in a way I catch someone's eye, his glance is as cold as ice, eyes look past eyes like searchlights crossing, with no more humanity or communication. In freezing despair, I walk down the street, trying to attract to myself a suggestion of warmth by showing in my expression . . . something . . . or something. . . .

And everybody walks past me, refusing to see or to lift a finger. No one cares, no one will help me. An abstract impenetrable indifference in a stranger's eye is all I ever see.

The world belongs to heartless people and to machines which can't give. Only the others, the heroes, know how to give. Out of their great generosity they gave me the truth, paid me the compliment of not lying to me. Not one of them ever told me life was worth living. They are the only people I've ever loved. I think only of them, and of how they are lost to me. How I shall never again sit beside someone who loves me while the world races past. Never again cross the tropic of Capricorn, or, under the arctic stars, in the blackness of firs and spruce, see the black glitter of ice in starlight, in the cold snow countries.

The world in which I was really alive consisted of hotel bedrooms and one man in a car. But that world was enormous and splendid, containing cities and continents, forests and seas and mountains, plants and animals, the Pole star and the Southern Cross. The heroes who showed me how to live also showed me everything everywhere in the world.

Now my world is only their faces, which have gone for ever, which get further and further away. I don't feel alive any more. I see nothing at all of the outside world. There are no more oceans or mountains for me.

I don't look up now. I always try not to look at the stars. I can't bear to see them, because the stars remind me of loving and of being loved.

### dead-end

things &  
     faces  
         drift  
         alley-down, old  
         fish-fold newspapers  
         press whisp-  
         ering to walls, a  
 cat      quick-aside slips: man  
         knocks at doors, waits  
         wonders &  
         walks away.  
  
 nobody sees  
     the strange walls  
         silently  
             opening

*David Johnson*

# The Sweet Dream

## *Kant & the Revolutionary Hope for Utopia*

*"The mind of the philosopher rests with satisfaction on a small number of objects; but the spectacle of stupidity, slavery, extravagance, barbarity, afflicts him still more often; and the friend of humanity can enjoy unmixed pleasure only by surrendering to the sweet hopes of the future (aux douces espérances de l'avenir). . . ."*

CONDORCET (1795)

A DRAMATIC nineteenth-century sense of the historic divergence between England and France led Walter Bagehot to formulate a more general notion of national character. "All nations have a character," he was convinced, "and that character when once taken is, I do not say unchangeable—religion modifies it, catastrophe annihilates it—but the least changeable thing in this ever-varying and changeable world." Certainly he was in no doubt of the national characteristics of the French—"clever . . . versatile . . . intellectual . . . dogmatic . . . excitable . . . volatile . . . superficial . . . over-logical . . . uncompromising. . . ." All this amounted to "some lurking quality, or want of quality, in the national character of the French nation which renders them but poorly adaptable for the form and freedom and constitution which they have so often, with such zeal and so vainly, attempted to establish." Bagehot's handy epigram was that they were "too clever to be practical, and not dull enough to be free." As for the English, here too was no puzzlement, although he could not refrain from putting the rhetorical question—"Why are we free and they slaves? we praetors and they barbers? Why do

stupid people always win?" He gave the answer away. "What we opprobriously call stupidity, though not an enlivening quality in common society, is Nature's favourite resource for preserving steadiness of conduct and consistency of opinion." He found it consoling that "in real sound stupidity the English are unrivalled"; they learned, slowly, only what they must, and they did their duty because they knew of nothing else to do. Yet, beyond the irony, was there no glimmer of wisdom here? Was it only dullness and slowness that saved his countrymen from that "superfluous energy which flows over into philosophy, and has worked into big systems what should have been left as little suggestions"?

*Old things need not be therefore true,  
O brother men, nor yet the new;  
Ah, still awhile the old thought retain,  
And yet consider it again.<sup>1</sup>*

There is a grotesque and exasperating moment when in the shadow of the stereotypes of national character there is suddenly a hint in the course of actual events that this indeed may be the way things truly are. Once, when a serious clash seemed to impend between London workmen and the police whom the Tory government had mobilised, John Stuart Mill, true son of his radical father (who had pondered so long over "the art of revolution"), went out into Hyde Park to advise the militant workers: "I told them that a proceeding which would certainly produce a collision with the military could only be justifiable on two conditions; if the position of affairs had become such that a revolution was desirable, and if they thought themselves able to accomplish one. To this argument, after considerable discussion, they at last yielded. . . ."<sup>2</sup> How far we are from desperate Russia, tortured France! What would those others have said? Would they have taken

<sup>1</sup> Bagehot's *Historical Essays* (1965), pp. 401-433; *Physics and Politics* (1867), ch. 6; and, generally, Alastair Buchan, *The Spare Chancellor: the Life of Walter Bagehot* (1959) and Norman St. John-Stevas, *Walter Bagehot* (1959).

<sup>2</sup> J. S. Mill, *Autobiography* (1873; Oxford ed., 1940), pp. 246-7; Michael St. John Packe, *The Life of John Stuart Mill* (1954), pp. 459-60.

thought, sketched out conditions, calculated the chances, left open the possibilities of reconsideration?

Small wonder that de Tocqueville, in Paris, lost patience with his countrymen's penchant for "wholesale destruction," never reforming, always transforming; and lost himself in thoughts of what might have happened in France had a monarch of Frederick the Great's temperament been on the throne. Was there a conceivable constitutional remedy, or was it only a narrow choice "between meekly accepting everything or destroying the whole system"?<sup>3</sup>

The issue of a third choice was actually faced by the revolutionaries, but almost always too late and usually in the shadow of the guillotine.

A keen European observer, writing to James Madison from Paris, thought that "if they do not aim at too much they may begin a good constitution." He also warned Condorcet that "it was not possible to destroy everything at once." Condorcet's reply is one of the great plaintive cries in the history of revolution—"Who ever talked of destroying everything at once?"<sup>4</sup>

FROM THIS MOMENT onwards this was, inescapably, the issue that would try men's minds—whether (and if yes, how: and if not, why not) a new breed of men, the committed revolutionary intellectuals, was to proceed to a total and immediate destruction in the name of a complete and permanent renewal. Kant, who had spoken most favourably of the French Revolution (and of the American rebellion too)

<sup>3</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Régime and the French Revolution* (1856; tr. Gilbert, 1955), pp. 141, 162-5.

<sup>4</sup> R. R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution*, Vol. I (1959), p. 470.

<sup>5</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Zum ewigen Frieden* (ed. 1795), pp. 103-4. *Metaphysik der Sitten* (1787), in Kant, *Werke* (ed. Weischedel, 1956), Vol. IV, p. 479. *Perpetual Peace* (ed. Beck, 1957), pp. 53, 59.

and who was convinced that without "fantasy" and "enthusiasm" nothing great had ever been achieved in the world, thought incessantly about this problem and finally issued an historic warning about the relationship between moral and political ideals and social realities. He who had known what it was to give oneself up to "the sweet feeling of benevolence" (*dem süßen Gefühl des Wohltuns*) and who had "dreamed the sweet dream," argued that the idea of the highest political good (e.g., perpetual peace) must not be "taken in a revolutionary sense and made the basis of a sudden change through violent overthrow of a previously existing wrong condition." Rather, it must be "sought for and realised by gradual reform

in the light of firm principles. . . ." There were not inconsiderable difficulties here. How could he reconcile firmness with gradualism, principles with the slow process of "an endlessly progressive approximation (*eine ins Unendliche fortschreitende Annäherung*)"?<sup>5</sup>

The revolutionary Kant wrestled with Kant the reformer. When he militantly insisted that "the rights of man must be held sacred," he could not help but go on to say, "One cannot compromise here and seek the middle course of a pragmatic conditional law between the morally right

and the expedient. All politics must bend its knee before the right. . . ." *Fiat justitia, pereat mundus*—a "true maxim" whose meaning, *zu deutsch*, he spelled out as "Let justice reign even if all the rascals in the world should perish from it"—was for him "a stout principle of right." But when he thought of abstractions as the motive force of human action, he had his hesitations. "Very few people act from principles, and that is good; the more general the principles are and the more steadfastly a person adheres to them, the more damage is done." More than that, there was on occasion a distinct tone of aversion in his attitude towards "general philanthropy." "Love of



KANT

mankind as a whole contains the largest volume but the lowest intensity. If I am interested in the well-being of a particular man in proportion to my love of mankind, my interest will be small." With such a small interest what prospect could there be for the fulfilment of the duty to respect one's neighbour and "never to use him merely as a means for my purposes but to honour his dignity"? Surely only a dim hope.<sup>6</sup>

For clearly, as Kant came to fear, more than rascals perished in an uncompromising, unpragmatic reign of justice. Inasmuch as the revolutionary upheaval produced its effects "tempestuously and violently," it could hardly be "ushered in according to plan without damage to freedom." How indeed could its mistakes be expunged except through yet another "new (and at any time dangerous) revolution"? And if, in fact, a revolution accomplished "the fall of personal despotism or of avaricious or tyrannical oppression," would this constitute a real victory for enlightenment and "a true reform in ways of thinking"? For would not "new prejudices serve as well as old ones to harness the great unthinking masses"? No, the transition to a new progressive order of affairs could only be effected through "gradually advancing reform."

Yet wasn't the price of Kantian progress often the crude and painful excesses of precisely a Kantian devotion to stout principle?

I grant that I cannot really reconcile myself to the following expressions made use of even by clever men. "A certain people (engaged in a struggle for civil freedom) is not yet ripe for freedom." "The bondmen of a landed proprietor are not yet ready for freedom." And hence, likewise, "Mankind in general is not yet ripe for freedom of belief." For according to such a pre-supposition, freedom will never arrive, since we cannot *ripen* to this freedom if we are not first of all placed therein. (We must be free in order to be able to make purposive use of our powers

<sup>6</sup> *Zum Ewigen Frieden*, pp. 87, 91; *Perpetual Peace*, pp. 44, 46. Kant (ed. Rabel, 1963), pp. 62, 317. *Werke*, Vol. IV, pp. 586-8.

<sup>7</sup> Kant, *Werke*, Vol. IV, pp. 786, 862-3n.; *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793; ed. Greene-Hudson, 1960), pp. 112-13, 176n. *Werke*, Vol. VI, p. 55; "What is Enlightenment?" (1784), in Kant, *On History* (ed. Beck, 1963), p. 4. Edmund Wilson, "The Documents on De Sade," in *The Bit between My Teeth* (1966), p. 217; Marquis de Sade, *Selected Letters* (ed. Lély, 1965), pp. 168-88.

<sup>8</sup> *Metaphysik der Sitten* (1797), in *Werke*, Vol. IV, p. 599; *The Metaphysical Principles of Virtue* (tr. Ellington, 1964), p. 126.

in freedom.) The first attempts will indeed be crude and usually will be attended by a more painful and more dangerous state than that in which we are still under the orders and also the care of others. Yet we never ripen with respect to reason except through *our own* efforts (which we can make only when we are free). . . .

Kant's dilemma deepened. There was always a small strain of the Jacobin in him, and one wonders whether he had ever heard the rumour that he had accepted an invitation from Sieyès to come to Paris as his advisor. How would he have survived? (Even the Marquis de Sade, who just before his liberation had been rousing the revolutionary crowd from his cell-window in the Bastille and was given his freedom as a victim of the old régime, found himself re-sentenced to prison by the Revolution for the political crime of "*modérantisme*.")<sup>7</sup>

### Of Passion & Prudence

THE ROOT OF THE DILEMMA was in an uneasy association between the revolutionary category of the perfect and the political imperative of reason. Kant had only contempt for what he thought of as mindless empiricism and practicality. "Moderation," or "steering a mid-course," left him cold—"its medicine is like the 'Venetian treacle' wherein so many good things have been mixed that it is good for nothing." Confronted with the ills and miseries of a defective social order, he put an urgent question: "How can they be remedied as soon as possible?" Reconciliation might have been a duty of man, but he was quick to insist that it not be confused with "the weak toleration of wrongs which renounces stern measures."<sup>8</sup>

Yet here, too, a tension recurred in him between passion and prudence, between principle and practice (as if, indeed, there were in him a touch both of Burke and Bakunin).

It would be absurd to demand that every defect be immediately and impetuously changed (*sofort und mit Ungestüm*). . . . But it can be demanded that at least the maxim of the necessity of such a change should be taken to heart by those in power, so that they may continuously approach the goal of the constitution that is best under laws of right.

Still, were there not situations (he had to admit it) which were "ripe for complete transformation (*zur völligen Umwälzung*)"? And how would he finally feel about "a violent revolution, engendered by a bad constitution, introducing by illegal means a more legal constitu-

tion"? This troubled Kant; but his ultimate disposition was towards the kind of prudence embodied in such maxims as: If you bend the reed too much you break it, and: He who attempts too much attempts nothing. He opted for "peaceable means," for he feared "the anarchic condition which would result from precipitate reform." Above all (and this in the time of the Jacobin terror),

... even when nature herself produces revolutions, political wisdom will not employ them to legitimise still greater oppression. On the contrary, it will use them as a call of nature for fundamental reforms to produce a lawful constitution founded upon principles of freedom, for only such a constitution is durable.

Kant, thus, set himself in a great critical tradition, estranged from both "despotising moralists" and "moralising politicians," alarmed at the imprudent precipitateness of the one and contemptuous of the unprincipled practical tinkering of the other.

In a famous work of 1793 he can still be seen wavering between a cautious course which bordered on unattractive middling principles of moderation and the perfect path of human transformation which could only be the revolutionary apocalypse. How is man ever to become a truly human, moral and virtuous creature? Such an heroic state of earthly affairs, he argues in one place, "cannot be brought about through gradual reformation (*allmähliche Reform*)... but must be effected through a revolution in man's disposition.... He can become a new man only by a kind of rebirth, as it were a new creation...." Yet, in another place, he is forced to reject those simple-minded propositions from Seneca to Rousseau against which "the history of all times cry out," disengaging himself from the sharp disjunctions of "rigorists" and "latitudinarians," and even going so far as to content himself with the unexciting observation that "Experience actually seems to substantiate the middle ground between the two extremes...."

<sup>9</sup> Kant (ed. Rabel), p. 288. *Zum Ewigen Frieden*, pp. 71-74; *Perpetual Peace*, pp. 38-9. *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft* (1793), in *Werke*, Vol. IV, pp. 665-99; *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (tr. Greene-Hudson), pp. 15-43.

<sup>10</sup> *Über Pädagogik* (1803), in *Werke*, Vol. VI, pp. 700-1; *Education* (tr. Churton, 1960), p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> *The Strife of the Faculties* (1798), in *On History*, pp. 137-54; *Werke*, Vol. VI, pp. 351-68.

<sup>12</sup> Bruce Mazlish, *The Riddle of History* (1966), p. 119. See, generally, Kurt Borries, *Kant als Politiker* (1928).

Here Kant openly confesses his inner reluctance to go to such equivocating liberal lengths; *Mitteldinge* had to be rigorously resisted; for, after all, "it is of great consequence to ethics in general to avoid admitting, so long as it is possible, of anything morally intermediate... for with such ambiguity all maxims are in danger of forfeiting their precision and stability." That he might also be called upon to offer a stable contribution which could make precise just this troublesome principle of ambiguity was not his momentary concern. It was enough that he was being driven on to intellectual revisions; and when ideal possibilities and real consequences came into increasingly open conflict, a sense of new dangers replaced some of Kant's old fears of intermediacy.<sup>9</sup>

IT IS NOT FULLY CLEAR how Kant intended to occupy the middle ground, free from the strains of the extremes. Writing of "a glorious ideal" in his study of *Education*,<sup>10</sup> Kant argued that "it matters little if we are not able to realise it at once. Only we must not look upon the idea as chimerical, nor decry it as a beautiful dream, notwithstanding the difficulties that stand in the way of its realisation. An idea is nothing else than the conception of a perfection which has not yet been experienced. For instance, the idea of a perfect republic governed by principles of justice—is such an idea impossible because it has not yet been experienced?... That such an idea might become "dangerous" and the drastic actions which it promoted "culpable"—these suspicions overtook Kant in the 1790s when he contemplated the course of the French Revolution.

The revolution of a gifted people which we have seen unfolding in our day may succeed or miscarry; it may be filled with misery and atrocities to the point that a sensible man, were he boldly to hope to execute it successfully the second time, would never resolve to make the experiment at such cost—this revolution, I say, nonetheless finds in the hearts of all spectators (who are not engaged in this game themselves) a wishful participation that borders closely on enthusiasm, the very expression of which is fraught with danger....<sup>11</sup>

There are still traces here of Kant's two minds on the subject. If, as has been said by a recent critic,<sup>12</sup> there is "a fundamental ambiguity" in Kant's thought, it is an ambiguity which illuminates more meanings than most fundamental clarities.

Kant, for all his sedentary Königsberg life,

lived very much in the intellectual climate of the day, and his political temperament was ceaselessly engaged in the onrushing European events. Agitated by the developments of the Revolution in France ("the topic of every conversation around here"), a Berlin correspondent raised with Kant the relevance of his views to the new questions being argued and offered a humble suggestion to the *Meister*: "I believe that there are many interesting things to be said about the rationality of the basic principles on which the French Republic bases itself, if only it were prudent to write about such things..." One of Kant's friends has recorded that political matters were not to be mentioned in his study, only at table could they be discussed; then from his table, as another friend reported, "a cosmopolitan and free-thinking philosopher watched the experiment which was to realise the idea of a perfect constitution demanded by reason with the same pleasure as a scientist has in looking upon an experiment which is to corroborate an important hypothesis..."<sup>13</sup> With whatever wisdom he extracted from the lessons of experience he sought to disengage social ideals from utopian chimaeras, to salvage a faith in the perfect from the dismal failures of brave human effort, and to maintain his optimism about progress in the face of the snail's pace of destiny. Kant's metaphysical ingenuity saved him, but humour helped too. His intellectual rigour was not above allowing an old joke—he tells it in the conclusion to his *Streit der Facultäten* (1798), and perhaps then it was new—about the doctor, who constantly reported an improving pulse, respiration, and stool, and the ailing patient who replied, "How's my illness? How should it be? I'm dying of improvement, pure and simple! (*Ich sterbe vor lauter Besserung!*)..." Kant, the philosopher of the *Aufklärung*, could not bring himself to blame those who had begun to despair of the health of humanity, its progress towards the better, and other Enlightenment ideals. The utopians loved mankind too much, and the revolutionaries loved men too little.

<sup>13</sup> Kant, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. IX (1922), pp. 436-7; *Philosophical Correspondence* (ed. Zweig, 1967), p. 207. Reinhold Aris, *History of Political Thought in Germany: 1789-1815* (1936), p. 73n.

<sup>14</sup> *The Strife of the Faculties* (1798), *Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View* (1784), and *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* (1786), in Kant, *On History*, pp. 16-17, 59-60, 153; *Werke*, Vol. VI, pp. 39-92, 367.

KANT TRIED TO RESOLVE his difficulties by revising his utopian longing and reducing his revolutionary commitment. He made a distinction between millennium and utopia. He defended the reasonable dreams of More, Plato, and Harrington, but separated himself from the pious enthusiasm for "a renovated world after this one will have perished in flames." He vindicated the devotion to "distant aims" and, indeed, "the conscious expectation of the future" as the decisive mark of humanity; but he disdained the confounding of man's true hope with an uncultured and instinct-ridden wish for some form of paradise. Thomas More would have understood. Kant made sure to point out that in the achievement of a universal civic order "with the greatest freedom" what would emerge would be a society "in which there is mutual opposition among the members..." More than that, any "complete solution" is impossible, for "from such crooked wood as man is made of, nothing perfectly straight can be built. (*Aus so krummen Holze, als woraus der Mensch gemacht ist, kann nichts ganz Gerades gezimmert werden.*)..."<sup>14</sup>

These were sensitive and subtle revisions. But, like Spinoza before him who had concluded that doctrines could only be "chimaera" and "utopia" if philosophers could not conceive "a theory of politics which could be turned to use," Kant came no further towards a usable strategy of political action. Progress must come, but it would be slow and devious; glorious ideals must be dreamed, but they might prompt pernicious passions. He could not return to a confidence in an enlightened King Utopus for he sensed that any philosopher-king would founder on the corruption of reason which power inevitably brings. What remained of his notions of utopia and revolution was a cautious hope that social reform would somehow go forward "from above," i.e., "not from bottom to top, but from top to bottom." This was not, of course, reason enough to abandon hope. On the contrary, the evolutionary perspective confirmed his optimism about the future: "evolution instead of revolution." But this was less political philosophy than the metaphysics of history.

### From More to Marx

IN THIS CONTEXT of essential temperament, the sharp contrasts in the ultimate messages of those three European masters of political

metaphysics, More, Kant, and Marx, emerge most forcefully. More preferred utopia to revolution (or what he called "hurly burly"); Marx preferred revolution to utopia. And Kant, increasingly suspicious of the ruinous violence of the total overturn as well as the perfect absolutism of the millennial fantasy, tried to overcome his peculiar penchant for both.

This may or may not be the tragic contradiction of that utopian state of mind which, as writers like Friedrich Hayek and J. L. Talmon have insisted, "always" starts with day-dreams and ends with tyranny. I am not eager to press polemically either side of this argument, especially since the Utopian founding father himself would appear to have been in real uncertainty. The troubled passage I am referring to occurs in Sir Thomas More's *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*. This work was written in a bitter and intolerant mood against "Luthers pestylent heresyes," which led him to a justification of the banning of the English Bible. These were days, he notes (and here I modernise some spelling), "in which Tyndale hath (God amend him!) with the infection of his contagious heresies, so sore poisoned malicious and new-fangled folks"; hence the decision "for the while to prohibit the scripture of God to be suffered in English tongue among the people's hands, lest evil folke by false drawing of every good thing they read in to the colour and maintenance of their own fond fantasies, and turning all honey into poison, might both do deadly hurt unto themselves, and spread also that infection farther abroad. . . ." At this point More is overtaken by a personal sense of troubled self-consciousness: what of his own works? Here he makes his historic retreat, an intellectual withdrawal which has left a disfiguring question-mark on the whole story of simple utopian innocence.<sup>15</sup>

I say therefore, in these days in which men by their own default misconstrue and take harm of the very scripture of God, until men better amend, if any man would now translate [Erasmus'] *Moria* into English, or some works either that I have myself written ere this, albeit

<sup>15</sup> Sir Thomas More, *The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer* (1532), Bk. 2, p. 129; *The Workes of Sir Thomas More, Knyght, sometyme Lord Chauncellour of England, wrytten by him in the Englysh Tonge* (1557), pp. 422-3. There are minor differences in this passage as printed in these two editions in the British Museum.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Southey, *Sir Thomas More: or, Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society* (1831), Vol. II, pp. 303, 458-9.

there be no harm therein, folke yet being (as they be) given to take harm of that which is good, I would not only my darling's books [*i.e.*, Erasmus'] but mine own also, help to burn them both with mine own hands, rather than folke should (though through their own fault) take any harm of them, seeing that I see them likely in these days so to do.

If More himself is quite prepared to burn his own book so deadly is the hurt of Utopian fantasies, one would be hard put to deny the critic's equation of literary virtue and political vice. More might well have agreed with de Tocqueville that "what is a merit in the writer may well be a vice in the statesman and the very qualities which go to make great literature can lead to catastrophic revolutions. . . ." Nor would he conceivably have disputed those 19th-century words which Robert Southey put into his mouth in an imaginary colloquy in his *More* book: ". . . If in the latter part of my mortal existence I had misgivings concerning any of my writings, they were of the single one, which is still a living work, and which will continue so to be. I feared that speculative opinions which had been intended for the possible but remote benefit of mankind, might, by unhappy circumstances be rendered instrumental to great and immediate evil. . . ."<sup>16</sup> However, this great (and surprising) self-critical tradition of the utopian's own fear of utopianism is not my present concern.

What I am trying to suggest is that the utopian detail makes possible a critical focus between the real and the ideal. In dreams begin responsibilities. If the primary aspiration of all history is held to be a genuine community of human beings, then the utopian prophecy becomes the usable measure of all things. It is precisely this prophetic tradition that Marx, as an anti-utopian revolutionary, abjured. Revolutionary man tends either to be a connoisseur of the apocalypse or a visionary of the terrestrial paradise. Prophetic utopians like St. Simon, Fourier, Robert Owen, were cursorily dismissed: "Those new social systems were from the outset doomed to be utopias; the more their details were elaborated, the more they necessarily receded into pure fantasy."

It is only fair to reiterate that this was not done without some mixed feelings, for Marx and Engels had defended the "dreamers" against the "philistines": "We, on the contrary, delight in the inspired ideas and germs of ideas which everywhere emerge through their covering of fantasy. . . ." But then these solutions



were only "produced out of their heads (*aus dem Kopfe erzeugt*).” The prophetic utopians may have “anticipated with genius countless truths,” but it was only when Marxism came along that “the validity of these truths could be proved scientifically.” Marx was infatuated and Engels intoxicated with the scientific aspect of their sociological enquiries; and they recovered soon enough from the early ambivalence of their attitude towards the prophets. Utopia could not realise itself without the abolition of romantic longing and political escapism; and these cannot be abolished without the recognition of historical revolutionary necessity. Utopia will not come because it is desirable; it will come because it is necessary and inevitable. The others may have seen a vision, but they had been privileged to hear the crack of the thunder. And suddenly “the task was no longer to manufacture a system of society as perfect as possible, but to investigate the historical economic process from which these classes and their antagonisms had of necessity sprung and to discover in the economic position thus created the means for solving the conflict...” The others, possessing only their vision, were mere dreamers; they, with the logic of history at their command, had won the prize of certitude. Today, with a century of hindsight at our command, it would only appear that one man’s logic is another man’s fantasy.

“I am working like mad all through the nights,” Marx wrote to Engels in December 1857, “so that I may at least have the outlines clear before the *déluge* comes.”<sup>17</sup> They did not pause, impatiently waiting for the apocalypse, to ask themselves: Was there truly a contradiction between the ethical projection of the ideal and the critical analysis of the real? Were these two moral and intellectual tasks mutually exclusive? It is clear, as can be seen from the political career of Thomas More, that utopian vision without a social base is politically helpless; but a political movement without utopian vision is morally blind.

<sup>17</sup> Marx-Engels, *Selected Works* (1951 ed.), Vol. II, pp. 111–112. *Briefwechsel* (1949 ed.), Vol. II, p. 314.

<sup>18</sup> *Werke* (ed. Weischedel, 1964), Vol. VI, pp. 357–67; *The Strife of the Faculties* (1798), in Immanuel Kant, *On History* (ed. Beck, 1963), pp. 143–152; *Lectures on Ethics* (tr. Infield, 1963), pp. 252–3. *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. XI, pp. 75–7; *Philosophical Correspondence*, p. 158.

THIS WAS THE SENSE of Kant’s last words on behalf of what he called the “sweet dream.” More’s *Utopia*, like Plato’s *Republic* and Harrington’s *Oceana* “have never so much as been tried (Cromwell’s abortive monster of a despotic republic excepted)....” True, in the bitterness Kant had come to feel about the costly revolutionary experiment of his own day, he became persuaded that it was “rash” to propose dreams and, indeed, “culpable to abolish what presently exists.” He who had confidently announced that “the ultimate destiny of the human race was the greatest moral perfection” now felt that “we must not hope too much from men in their progress towards the better...” He was reluctant to face the mockery of politicians who took “the hopes of man as the dreamings of distraught minds.” Yet, as he wrote, “it is sweet, however, to imagine constitutions corresponding to the requirements of reason.” Utopian ideals were not “empty chimaerae”; and he held the perpetual approaches to their consummation not only thinkable but obligatory. What was to remain throughout as his constant personal guide was, in a happy phrase, “the compass of reason.” A whole chastened conception of the hazardous relationship between heroic human ideals and historic social difficulties was summed up in this passage from one of his letters:

To dash with hasty, enterprising steps toward a far away goal has always been injurious to a thorough insight. He who shows us the cliffs has not necessarily set them up, and even if someone maintains that it is impossible to pass through them *with full sails* (of dogmatism), he has not on that account denied *every* possibility of getting through. I think that you will not find the compass of reason to be unnecessary or misleading in this venture...<sup>18</sup>

When, then, is a Utopian an anti-Utopian? When his extravagant concern for the ideal future drives him back to a renewed involvement in the real present. In the case of More, his second thoughts forced him to a self-destructive critique of irresponsible social fantasy; in the case of Marx, to an uncontrollable rage against all dreamers, and their “rotten spirit” which “plays with fancy pictures of the future structure of society... silly, stale, and basically reactionary.” In the case of Kant the tension of a utopian’s anti-utopianism issued in a mild, reasonable revision of “sweet dreams.”

That the *Zeitgeist* was not pleased will surprise no student of ideology. Young Schiller was outraged and now found Kant’s views

"empörend"; Goethe, similarly upset at the promulgation of Kant's concept of a "radical evil" (*das radikale Böse*) in human affairs, could hardly contain his horror (in a letter to Herder) at this "wanton and shameful spot" on the revered philosopher's record. It is understandable that such unorthodox departures on the part of the philosopher of "the German theory of the French Revolution" (as Marx, following Heine, was to call him) should have proved so alarming for so many of his faithful readers. In a sense, Kant's doubts and deviations from the contemporary revolutionary ideology cast him in the role of the first German revisionist.<sup>19</sup>

THERE IS A PASSAGE in the *Streit der Facultäten* (1798) which, touching upon utopia and the future, astronomy and revolution, progress, reform and the mixture of good and evil, moves suggestively through many of our main themes.

Kant begins by puzzling over the question: "What have we to expect of the future? Continual progress or continual regress?" He was tempted to see only the farcical aspect of "all the doings on our globe." The global reference led him directly to an astronomical standpoint: for the planets themselves, as seen from the earth, seemed to go "now forward, now backward, and now to stand still." However, according to the Copernican hypothesis (and even the tangle of Tycho Brahe's cycles and epicycles), there would appear to be some "regular course." The astronomical references led Kant onwards to the problem of Revolution which he had once previously associated with the systematic structure of the cosmos, albeit with very little hope of fixing its short path in the context of human affairs. Yet how sturdy was the astronomical analogue, and how long could it survive a reasonable critique? What if the revolution as it actually happens in society does not conform to either Copernicus' principle of circularity or Condorcet's principle of linear progress? Was

there ever, in historical events, a "full compassing" or a complete, original turn? Was not what men were pleased to call "Revolution" only an ingenious metaphor which made up in beguiling echoes of celestial certitude and heavenly promise for what it lacked in sober meaningful content? And even if it came to command human enthusiasm and sympathy, political zeal and even moral greatness, Kant was convinced—both by "reading the signs of the day" and by facing "the mixture of good and evil in man's predisposition"—that mankind's progress in the course of history would proceed "gradually, not by revolution but by evolution...."

All this might well have been what Kant himself referred to as "simply the mode of thinking of the spectators which reveals itself publicly in this game of great revolutions (*bloss die Denkungsart der Zuschauer, welche sich bei diesem Spiele grosser Umwandlungen öffentlich verrät*). . . ."

It is a game, evidently, with only so many fixed pieces, just so many limited moves. Contemplating the record of post-revolutionary reconsiderations from, say, Kant to Koestler, one cannot help reinforcing Professor A. O. Lovejoy's suspicion (in that masterful study in intellectual history, *The Great Chain of Being*) that each age seems to evolve new species of reasonings and conclusions, even though upon the same old problems: "But the truth is that the number of essentially distinct philosophical ideas or dialectical motives is—as the number of really distinct jokes is said to be—decidedly limited. . . ."

Kant himself once noted the two most maniacal elements in the *Schwärmerei* that had been gaining ground in a Europe badly befuddled by "loquacious ignorance" and "airy possibilities": namely, faddish French omniscience and systematic German fanaticism. He felt that perhaps for the moment "disdainful silence" would be "more appropriate toward such madness." Movements of this kind, he reassured one of his worried students (in a letter which was surely too ironical for real comfort), "have but a short duration before they make way for new follies."<sup>20</sup>

### Of Truth & Sincerity

A NUMBER OF important considerations remained for a philosophy which sought belatedly to qualify in this singular fashion the

<sup>19</sup> Marx to Sorge, 19 Oct. 1877, in *Selected Correspondence* (tr. Torr, 1942), p. 350. Marx-Engels, *Werke* (ed. 1964), Vol. I, p. 80. Karl Jaspers, "Das Radikal Böse bei Kant," in *Rechenschaft und Ausblick* (1951), p. 90.

<sup>20</sup> *Werke* (ed. Weischedel), Vol. VI, pp. 355-8; *The Quarrel between the Faculties in Kant* (tr. Rabel), pp. 335-6, and in *Kant On History* (ed. Beck), pp. 141-4. Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (1936), p. 4. *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. XI, pp. 141-3; *Philosophical Correspondence*, pp. 159-61.

new imperatives of utopian ideals and revolutionary methods—e.g., the reciprocity of means and ends, the role of the independent intellectual, and the relationship between ideals and ideology.

In October 1793 a Berlin editor had written to Kant about the “disgusting” turn taken by the French Revolution, “as all true freedom and morality as well as all art of government and legislation is trodden under foot. . . .” He went on to say: “Of course, the cutting off of heads is easy, especially if one has it done by others.” And he expressed his relief that in the September issue of the *Berliner Monatsschrift* Kant had evidently clarified his political position in an article which reconsidered “empty ideals and philosophical dreams—in short, that what sounds all right in theory has no value in practice. . . .” The argument was rather more complex than his correspondent had sensed, for Kant had in point of fact declined to abandon the ideas of a Rousseau or an Abbé de St. Pierre or, indeed, the kind of general theory which outlines what *ought to be* and which, by recommending the earthly powers to act as if this were possible, “by this very action makes it possible.” He felt certain that “after many failures Reason will emerge as victorious”; he still counted on “human nature,” for he could not and would not believe it to be “so swallowed up in evil that all respect for rights and duties should be quite extinguished in it.” Yet the horror of the violent purge remained; and he was later to write:

No pretended good intention can wipe off the stain of injustice in the means applied. And if it is argued that the whole earth would still be in a lawless condition if those who introduced laws had shied from using violence, this is still no excuse. Nor is it an excuse for political revolutionaries (*Staatsrevolutionisten*) that when constitutions have degenerated, the people must be allowed to reform them by force and to be unjust once and for all in order to establish justice later more safely. . . .

Could a philosopher, even if he wanted to change the world, do any more under the circumstances than interpret it and criticise it? Kant was under no simple-minded illusions about the delimited intellectual task.

<sup>21</sup> Letter of E. G. Biester, 5 October 1793, in *Kant* (ed. Rabel), p. 260. *Metaphysik der Sitten*, in *Werke*, Vol. IV, p. 477. *Perpetual Peace*, p. 34. *Kant*, p. 278.

That kings should philosophise or philosophers become kings is not to be expected. Nor is it to be wished, since the possession of power inevitably corrupts the untrammelled judgment of reason. But kings or king-like peoples which rule themselves under laws of equality should not suffer the class of philosophers to disappear or to be silent, but should let them speak openly. This is indispensable to the enlightenment of the business of government. . . .

It was but a modest proposal (More had asked a bit less, Mill would ask for a good bit more); and Kant coupled it with an assurance that philosophers could not be confounded with plotters, propagandists, or lobbyists.<sup>21</sup>

BUT MEN OF POWER, then as now, were not so easily persuaded of the virtues of tolerance and the usefulness of reason and philosophy for the enlightened business of government. To “speak openly” was often to invite personal disaster. The lessons of More’s caution, Erasmus’ fearfulness, and Spinoza’s silence were not lost upon Immanuel Kant. His philosophical attempts to “stray beyond the limits” ran similarly afoul of royal Prussian edicts on orthodoxy and censorship. The courageous effort to revise the conventional interpretations of existing doctrine in the light of reason earned only the “great displeasure” of Frederick William who, in 1794, wrote sternly from Berlin to “Our Most Worthy and Erudite Professor and Dear Loyal Kant, Königsberg in Prussia. . . .” It was an “abuse of philosophy” to distort and debase “certain fundamental doctrines of Holy Scripture and Christianity.” The King was disappointed: “We should have expected better things from you. . . . You must yourself realise how irresponsibly you behave against your duty as a teacher of youth and against Our well-known sovereign intentions. . . .” The royal admonition was ominously straightforward: “In case of continued insubordination, you must unfailingly expect unpleasant consequences.” Indeed, the King was pressing his officials to institute proceedings against Kant, and (in a letter to Wöllner) expressed his dissatisfaction with the mildness and the slowness of the censorship. “At Frankfurt there is Steinbart who must be driven out; at Königsberg, Hasse who is a chief radical; of such things as well, as of the disgraceful writings of Kant there must be an end. . . . There must be an absolute stop to this disorder.”

Kant responded, as he admitted, “most submissively.” He gave promises of “obedience”

and of "not becoming guilty again," as befitted a "most faithful subject." He was then in his 71st year, but survival was all. "I shall in future completely desist from all public lectures or papers concerning religion, be it natural or revealed. . . ." As he later explained, he was choosing his phrases "most carefully"—"so that I should not be deprived of my freedom of judgment in religious matters *for ever*, but only so long as His Majesty was alive" (and, in point of fact, the philosopher survived the king by some seven years). Years before (in a letter to Moses Mendelssohn, in April 1766), Kant had tried to work out, in the face of so many difficulties in truth-telling, a personal principle of compromise: "... The loss of self-respect, which arises from the consciousness of an insincere mind, would be the greatest evil that could ever befall me, but it is quite certain that it will never happen. . . . It is indeed true that I think many things with the clearest conviction and to my great satisfaction, which I never have the courage to say. But I will never say anything which I do not think. . . ." And in Kant's unpublished papers there is the following remark of ultimate explanation:

To revoke and deny one's inner conviction is vicious and cannot be demanded of any person, but to remain silent in a case like this is a subject's duty, and while everything a person says must be true, it is not his duty to proclaim publicly all that is true. . . .<sup>22</sup>

THE TEMPORISING PHILOSOPHER'S self-justification has often been subjected to censure. Even in his own day (*viz.* the attitude of the Berlin pub-

lisher, Nicolai), Kant's accommodating conduct apparently gave offence. His Berlin editor, Biester, put it to him as gently as he could when he reported that "everyone" regretted the voluntary promise, for it could only mean "a great triumph for the enemies of the Enlightenment" and "the good cause suffers a great loss." It seemed to him that "you did not need to make this promise." Kant should have continued to write on the dangerous topics in question. "Granted, you would then perhaps have had to defend yourself again on specific points. Or you could even have remained silent for the rest of your life but without giving these people the satisfaction of being released from the fear of your words. . . ."

One's attitude depends on the judgment whether or not his subtle distinction between sincerity (*Aufrichtigkeit*) and candour (*Offenherzigkeit*) is viable. "I can admit, though it is much to be deplored," Kant observed in one of his censored books, "that candour (in speaking the *whole* truth which one knows) is not to be found in human nature. But we must be able to demand *sincerity* (that *all that one says* be said with truthfulness), and indeed if there were in our nature no predisposition to sincerity, whose cultivation merely is neglected, the human race must needs be, in its own eyes, an object of the deepest contempt. . . ."<sup>23</sup>

Among his recent critics who have not refrained from the contemptuous note is an American commentator who has written: "... I share with Nietzsche the feeling that Kant is an old Tartuffe. Thus, where others stress Kant's sweetness of character and nobility of purpose, I see the added hues of a petulant dogmatist, annoyed at public indifference to his great work; of a thin-blooded recluse, whose knowledge of human nature lacks depth and subtlety of insight. Others stress Kant's enlightened political views; I see also the half-hearted courage and the conformity to authority of a careful old man. . . ."<sup>24</sup>

There is a nobler tone in the older tradition of Kant criticism. As a 19th-century German biographer puts it:

It cannot be denied that more discretion than courage is manifested in this solemnly imposed duty of silence. The old man of seventy might have calmly awaited the "unpleasant consequences" threatened by the order. The Berlin authorities could scarcely have done more than to prohibit his writings and perhaps to withdraw the increase of his salary. Nevertheless, Kant was not of the stuff of which martyrs are

<sup>22</sup> *Der Streit der Facultäten* (1798), in *Werke*, Vol. VI, pp. 267-73; *The Quarrel between the Faculties*, in *Kant* (ed. Rabel), pp. 328-30. Friedrich Paulsen, *Immanuel Kant, His Life and Doctrine* (tr. 1902), p. 50. Kant to Moses Mendelssohn, 8 April 1766, in *Vermischte Schriften und Briefwechsel* (ed. Kirchman, 1873), pp. 384-5.

<sup>23</sup> *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. XI, pp. 535-6; *Philosophical Correspondence*, p. 220. *Religion within the Limits of Reason* (tr. Greene-Hudson), p. 178n.; *Werke*, Vol. IV, p. 865n.

<sup>24</sup> Bruce Mazlish, in the Kant chapter of his *The Riddle of History* (1966), p. 123. The lack of fairness and generosity of this view is practically conceded when the critic goes out of his way to quote—"purely *ad hominem*," he admits (p. 116n.)—a remark of the Nazi mass murderer, Adolph Eichmann, to the effect that he had tried to live as best he could "according to Kant's categorical imperative. . . ."

made. And he might comfort himself with the thought that he had already said all that was most essential. So he chose what was in accord with his nature, silence and peace. Of course, if he had declared, like the seventy-year-old Socrates in a similar position, that he had a higher mission in the world than the professorship which had been entrusted to him by the Royal Prussian Commission, that to this mission of teaching truth and combating error and lies he would not and could not become untrue, then a page of his life history, and a page of the history of German philosophy, would have been more splendidly distinguished than is now the case. . . .<sup>25</sup>

How deeply might Kant have objected? I should like to think that he would have felt not only the personal wound but also the ethical force of the argument. In a fragment found among Kant's *"Iose Blätter,"* there is an indirect political comment on this moral dilemma of personal safety and civic obligation: *"Die beste Regierungsform ist nicht die worin es am bequemsten ist zu leben, sondern worin dem Bürger sein Recht am meisten gesichert ist.* (The best form of government is not that in which it is most comfortable to live, but rather that in which the rights of the citizen are most secure)."<sup>26</sup>

HERE, THEN, WAS a revolutionary and a reformer, a utopian and a gradualist, a militant and yet a moderate, an endlessly critical philosopher who knew the temptations of ideology and who even in the bitterness of its deceptions retained a feeling of fellowship for those who wanted to associate imagination with power, for those who "dreamed the sweet dream."

A political artist can rule the world by the power of imagination: for example, when he declaims in the English parliament about the freedom of the people, or in the French Convention about the equality of all classes, as if they really existed. Yet it is better even to have the pretence of the good things which ennoble mankind than to be palpably deprived of them. (*Aber es ist doch besser, auch nur den Schein von dem Besitz dieses die Menschheit Veredelnden Guts für sich zu haben, als sich desselben handgreiflich beraubt zu fühlen. . . .*)<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Friedrich Paulsen, *Kant*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>26</sup> Aris, *History of Political Thought in Germany*, p. 100n.

<sup>27</sup> *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht* (1798), in *Werke*, Vol. IV, p. 485; *Kant*, p. 344.

<sup>28</sup> Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (1963), p. 203.

## The War of the Temperaments

THIS HIGH-MINDED MESSAGE from Königsberg might not have found its proper relevance in the Paris under the shadow of the guillotine. The pretence of good things? It was an outrageous "as-if" compensation for the palpable deprivations of a grand revolution gone berserk. Was there no more seasonable counsel for a noble generation trapped in an ignoble course of events?

In her philosophical study of revolution, Dr. Hannah Arendt refers to the "notion of a coincidence of foundation and preservation by virtue of augmentation"—but by that she only means that there is an inter-connection between the revolutionary act of beginning "something entirely new" and "conservative care" to shield this new beginning.<sup>28</sup>

This "care" was termed by Mme de Staël, more old-fashionedly, "moderation": and in full flight from the Terror she did not underestimate the difficulty of holding fast to it.

The more odious the old government, the more agreement there was to overthrow it, and the more difficult it is to distinguish among the various opinions separating those who, united for destruction, are divided in rebuilding. . . .

During a revolution the party that holds moderate opinions needs, more than any other, courage of soul and breadth of mind. It has two struggles to carry on, two kinds of argument to refute, two dangers to avoid. . . .

Some people heap ridicule upon opinions that are removed equally from two conflicting extremes. It is understandable that the two extreme parties should agree in attacking this common enemy. But it is by no means understandable that anyone should dare to call this way of thinking weak and indecisive. People have the knack of reducing everything to extremes in the belief that these are certain to be preferred. Opinions do exist that we must adopt without modification. But are we to allow every lunatic who discovers a new madness to erect a new barrier to the truth? . . .

Clearly she was too involved in the moral and strategic urgencies of the struggle to confront realistically the deeper psycho-mechanisms at work.

Hobbes, in fact, with characteristic tough-mindedness, suggested a form of permanent class-war of the extremes *versus* the moderates. (And he cast a cold eye on the perfervid efforts of the men of his own generation to maintain themselves against the obnoxious "Force of Others," not excepting the belated calls of the Lilburnes and the Miltons "to shew forth Temperance and Moderation.") "Considering the

great difference there is in Men," Hobbes wrote, "from the Diversity of the Passions, how some are vainly Glorious and hope for precedencie and superiority above their Fellows, not only when they are equall in Power but also when they are Inferiour; we must needs acknowledge that it must necessarily follow, that those men who are moderate, and look for no more but Equality of Nature, shall be obnoxious to the Force of Others, that will attempt to subdue them. And from hence shall proceed a general dissidence in Mankind, and mutuall fear one of another. . . ."<sup>29</sup>

It was not a peculiarly English insight, although when Pierre Bayle made a similar point, with perhaps even more pungency, he was an exile from France and conducting his magisterial argument against apocalyptic visionaries and their extremist passions from the more congenial intellectual atmosphere of Rotterdam. In fact it was in his article on Hobbes (in his *Dictionnaire*, begun in 1695) that Bayle most clearly indicated his disassociation—for all the subsequent misinterpretations of the *philosophes* and their Jacobin followers—with the mind-set of utopian revolution.

Let a man do the best he can, let him build better systems than Plato's *Republic*, More's *Utopia*, or Campanella's *Commonwealth of the Sun*, etc. All these fine ideas will be found short and deficient when they come to be reduced to practice. The passions of men, that arise from one another in a prodigious variety, would presently ruin the hopes we had conceived from these fine systems.<sup>30</sup>

"See what happens," Bayle admonishes (and Kant no doubt would have sympathized with the exercise), "when the finest things imaginable" are "found defective when applied to that matter which exists out of our minds, that is, to hard and impenetrable matter. . . ." There was, regrettably, no convenient bridge—and cer-

tainly not *Révolution*—between "the speculations of a man who forms a notion of a perfect government" and what Bayle set out as the real "image of human passions." To suppose otherwise would only to indulge in the folly of a Comenius who "filled his brain with Prophecies, Revolutions, the ruining of Anti-Christ, the Millennium, and such like ideas of a dangerous enthusiasm. . . ." For what Bayle detected in the contemporary chiliastic movement—and the so-called secular religions of the future were to share the same characteristics—was the psychological vulnerability of its enthusiasts, the social explosiveness of its programmatic extremism, and the dark tragic potential of its totalist commitment to a future prospect which promised felicity through purificatory violence. Prometheism tends to bedazzle and blind: and in the fascination with the fire one gets inured to the smoke. "Ye men of learning," Comenius had cried out (and the appeal has not failed to rouse fine spirits in all times<sup>31</sup>), "... see that ye delay not to assist the sacred fire with your sparks, nay, rather with your torches and with your fans. . . ." Bayle, for his part, tried rather to alarm Europe to the burning danger of the *fumo chiliastico*.

Moving profoundly beyond Hobbes' sense of the "obnoxious" conflicts of power and passion, Bayle was the first European thinker to call critical attention to a new fact of modern politics: the making of a revolution requires a prophetic vision, a utopian compound of enthusiasm, certainty, and apocalyptic drama. To this extent Bayle can, in a sense, be taken to be the father of the sociology of revolution (and the founder of such studies in comparative ideology as this). As he tersely observed, "in all ages and countries, Prophecies have been forged in order to excite people to Rebellion (*de tous tems, & en tout país, on a supposé des Prophéties pour porter les peuples à la révolte*). . . ." He concluded with what must surely be one of the most percipient—and, ironically enough, prophetic as well—thoughts of the whole first classic century of utopian revolutionism:

... for it is a very powerful engine for bringing about great revolutions, to prepare the people by explanations of the Apocalypse, uttered with an air of inspiration and enthusiasm. (*Car c'est une très-puissante machine pour amener sur la scène les grande Révolutions, que d'y préparer les peuples par des explications apocalyptiques, débitées avec des airs d'inspiration & d'enthousiasme.*)<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> "A quels signes peut-on connaître quelle est l'opinion de la majorité de la nation?" (1791), in *Madame de Staël* (1964, ed. Berger), pp. 103-4. Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore Politico* (1650), pp. 2-3. *The Life Records of John Milton* (ed. French, 1954), Vol. III, pp. 217-19.

<sup>30</sup> *Selections from Bayle's Dictionary* (ed. Beller & Lee, 1952), p. 133.

<sup>31</sup> The passage is cited by Dorothy Waley Singer in her eloquent contribution to the wartime anti-Hitler tribute to Comenius: *The Teacher of Nations* (ed. Needham, 1942), p. 73.

<sup>32</sup> Bayle, *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* (5me. ed., 1740), Vol. II, p. 308; Vol. III, p. 22. *A General Dictionary, Historical and Critical* (tr. 1736), Vol. IV, p. 648; Vol. VI, p. 572.

What is overpowering in Bayle—one is almost tempted also to call it premature—are these remarkable and prescient double-focused insights into the dual modern pattern of absolutist aspiration. The utopian revolutionaries chose to believe that what held true for men of religion could only be utterly irrelevant to men of reason and secular hope; they could never accept that both types of enthused total commitment shared the same forms of the political imagination. As modern utopianism developed, the apocalypse no more belonged to ancient theological dogma than revolution belonged to medieval astrological fancy. Both were part and parcel of what must be seen as the elementary forms of the ideological life, shaped in point of fact by the same imperious images of language and vagarious turns of temperament which Bayle had detected in Comenius, Hobbes in Milton, and Kant in the *Schwärmer* of his own day. Utopian revolutionary was but apocalyptic enthusiast writ different.

After such knowledge what remained of hope and purposefulness? Bayle grasped more poignantly than any other intellectual of his epoch the distressing implications of a position which, like Kant's own a century later, deprived itself so candidly of all the easy supports of optimism and certitude. There is indeed in some of Bayle's troubled asides a foreshadowing of two profound themes which will plague for centuries the subsequent career of the European intelligentsia. They can, I think, be put and illustrated in the following way.

1. *The tragedy of the man in the middle.* Of one contemporary effort to hold to a reasonably neutral balance, Bayle wrote these memorable lines:

... it was in vain that he hoped to stand upon the shore, a quiet spectator of the boisterousness of that sea. He found himself more exposed to the storm than if he had been in either of the fleets. This is the inevitable fate of those who pretend to keep a neutrality. They are exposed to the insults of both parties at once, and they obtain enemies without procuring themselves friends. Whereas, by espousing with zeal either of these two causes, they have friends as well

as enemies. A deplorable destiny of man, a manifest vanity of philosophic reason! It makes us look upon the tranquillity of the soul and the calmness of the passions as the end of all our labours, and the most precious fruit of our most painful meditations. And yet experience shows that as to the world there is no condition more unfortunate than that of friends who will not devote themselves to the waves of faction....

Such men as howl with the wolves have the advantage of not knowing they are in the wrong, for no men are less capable of seeing the faults of their faction and the good that may be found in the other party than those who are controlled by a fiery zeal and a quick resentment, and who are under the power of strong prejudice.... They will not be a hammer, and, therefore, they are an anvil upon which both sides beat continually. (*Ils ne veulent point être marteau, et cela fait que continuellement ils sont enclume à droite et à gauche.*)<sup>33</sup>

From Bayle to Mmc. de Staël to Albert Camus, it is this "deplorable destiny" between hammer and anvil that the intellectual historian has to confront: the struggle to hold out against the boisterous sea, to resist the waves of faction, to escape the howling wolves, to rise above the controlling powers of zeal, resentment, and prejudice à droite et à gauche. Its splendours and miseries will be as mixed as these metaphors.

Bayle knew, then, the "inconveniences of moderation," the tormenting implications of a reluctance "to adhere either to those who maintained the abuses, or to those who opposed them": for he thought "both too violent" and said, with Tully, "*Quem fugiamo habeo, quem sequar non habeo*, I know whom to avoid, but not whom to follow...." Yet why is it that this effort of "philosophic reason" to transcend the two warring causes should be felt to be condemned to an "inevitable fate"? Bayle's work pointed to a simple theorem which from time to time tempts the historian of ideas but rarely finds expression with so much grim, elemental candour.

2. *The historical amnesia of each new generation.* Was this, then, the original sin of the European spirit? What of progress, and cumulative wisdom, and the lessons of the past? "No!" Bayle cries out, more in sorrow than in scepticism, "The world is too unteachable to profit by the follies of past ages. Every age behaves as if it were the first...." He thought, with no little bitterness, that the historical spectacle of "a thousand dark passions" ought at least to produce in men "a salutary and mortifying humiliation"—but no: "The worst is, men do not profit by what is past; every generation betrays the same symptoms...."<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Howard Robinson, *Bayle the Sceptic* (1931), pp. 177-8; *Dictionnaire* (ed. 1820), Vol. VI, pp. 214-15; *General Dictionary*, Vol. V, p. 74.

<sup>34</sup> *Dictionnaire*, Vol. I, pp. 22, 184: "Non... le monde est trop indisciplinable pour profiter des maladies des siècles passez. Chaque siècle se comporte comme s'il étoit le premier venu.... Le pis est qu'on ne profite pas du passé: chaque génération fournit les mêmes symptômes...."

### Symptoms of Historical Amnesia

I RETURN TO my point of departure, to Mme. de Staël, and not because she offered any unforgettable solution but because she is, memory for memory, so much part of the problem: the symptomology of recurrent bouts of historical amnesia. Let me recall here her desperate mid-revolutionary plea on behalf of the moderate party and the men in the noble middle:

Far from rallying to itself feeble and timid souls, this party needs more than any other the courage that braves all kinds of distrust and danger. It must impress by the boldness of its character those whom it heartens by the wisdom of its opinions. It must be itself and not some absurd mixture or an irrelevant alternative to opposed extremes. It must, in short, demonstrate to all that reason is not a shade of meaning between extremes, but the primary colour. . . .<sup>35</sup>

In language and in sentiment, this is the true and, alas, forlorn French longing. A century-and-a-half later Albert Camus, pressed by his great radical antagonist, Jean-Paul Sartre, was still dreaming of the third choice, of the moderate party, and went back for refuge to Heraclitus, "the inventor of the constant change of

things who nevertheless set a limit to this perpetual process," and even further, to Nemesis, "the goddess of moderation and the implacable enemy of the immoderate." For it was against Sartre, unnamed and overwhelming, that Camus had written his manifesto on behalf of *l'homme révolté*: a curious title this, comprehensible only in the intimate context of French intellectual polemic. The passage which (I had always suspected it, and he once confirmed it to me) first formulated for Camus the deep difference between him and Sartre, between the rebel and the revolutionary, is a passing paragraph in Sartre's little book on *Baudelaire*. Let me give our last great committed revolutionary his due by citing it.<sup>36</sup>

The revolutionary [says Sartre, speaking for himself and, no doubt, Mme de Beauvoir] wants to change the world; he transcends it and moves towards the future, towards an order of values which he himself invents. The rebel is careful to preserve the abuses from which he suffers so that he can go on rebelling against them. He always shows signs of a bad conscience and of something resembling a feeling of guilt. He does not want to destroy or transcend the existing order; he simply wants to rise up against it. The more he attacks it, the more he secretly respects it. In the depths of his heart he preserves the rights which he challenges in public. If they disappeared, his own *raison d'être* would disappear with them. He would suddenly find himself plunged into a gratuitousness which frightens him. . . .

Nothing, I trust, could be clearer: except, possibly, that characteristic and revealing remark in the second volume of Simone de Beauvoir's autobiography where, speaking for herself and, no doubt, Sartre, she refers to their friend, Raymond Aron, as a "despised" moderate, and goes on to explain: "We were temperamentally opposed to the idea of reform: society, we felt, could change only as a result of sudden cataclysmic upheaval on a global scale. . . ."<sup>37</sup>

Bagehot's (and Tocqueville's) French intellectuals—clever, versatile, excitable, volatile, never reforming, always transforming—have come full turn. In their end is their beginning. The King is on his way to the scaffold. The cataclysm is upon us, the globe is in upheaval. All present things will be destroyed at once. Guiltless and without conscience, they embrace an anonymous future in the name of invented but undisclosed values. The sweet dream has become inviolate dogma. The revolution remains their utopia.

<sup>35</sup> *Madame de Staël* (ed. Berger), p. 107.

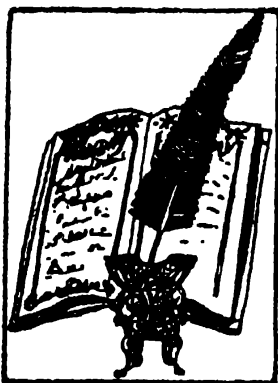
<sup>36</sup> Albert Camus, *L'Homme Révolté* (1951); *The Rebel* (tr. Bower, 1953). Jean-Paul Sartre, *Baudelaire* (1947), pp. 58-9; (tr. Turnell, 1949), p. 50.

<sup>37</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *The Prime of Life* (tr. Green, 1962), p. 30. The whole passage from this memoir of the 1930s has a certain topical interest in the recent revival of Paris ideological controversy.

"We saw a good deal of Raymond Aron. . . . He was a member of the Socialist Party, an organisation which we despised—firstly on the grounds that it was infiltrated by the bourgeoisie, and secondly because we were temperamentally opposed to the idea of reform: society, we felt, could change only as a result of sudden cataclysmic upheaval on a global scale. But we hardly ever talked politics with Aron. Mostly he and Sartre argued bitterly about problems of philosophy. I took no part in these discussions, since my mind moved too slowly for them; nevertheless I found myself more often than not on Aron's side. . . .

"Aron enjoyed critical analysis, and set himself to tear Sartre's rash syntheses to bits. He had the knack of getting his opponent in the fork of a dilemma and then crushing him with one sharp hammer stroke. 'There are two alternatives, *mon petit camarade*,' he would say. 'Take your choice.' . . . Sartre struggled hard to avoid being cornered, but as there was more imagination than logic in his mental processes, he had his work cut out. I cannot recall one occasion on which he convinced Aron—or on which Aron succeeded in shaking Sartre's own beliefs. . . ."





## Column

TO CALL ourselves a sick society has become the greatest of all contemporary platitudes, and surely no age has ever been quite so plentifully endowed with prophets of the wrath to come. From right and left, young and old, they thunder at us, Marcuse, Muggeridge, Chomsky, Cohn-Bendit, Tynan—the list is endless—and their fervour is so compelling that we only occasionally wonder whether the sickness is not in ourselves but in those who denounce it. Moreover, behind the, as it were, major prophets there follows a host of minor ones, for every Jeremiah there is an army of Micahs and Amoses, each no doubt perfectly sincere in vision of sin, yet all apparently equally willing, even eager, to accept the rich rewards, the foundation grants, the university chairs, the television contracts, which society showers today on its critics and detractors. Not the stake, but a television series is the martyrdom of a modern Savonarola.

No doubt this is all very well, and Jeremiahs and Savonarolas are a very good thing in their way. Every age deserves, and needs, one or two of them, but when they pop up everywhere, one begins to doubt whether the mantle of the prophet can be quite so easily and painlessly acquired, as if it were one of the newest models from Marks and Spencer or C & A Modes.

Nowhere does this cloud of witnesses to the doom which is upon us cast its shadow more sombrely than in the pages of our Sunday supplements. Week after week our attention is sternly directed, in one of these portentous "surveys" which seem to combine the correct air of moral and social earnestness with a nice eye for advertising appeal, to the devastation caused among us by sex, drugs, crime, homosexuality, teenage delinquency, sex, drugs, race, divorce, money, sex, drugs... and so on in a kind of *ewige Wiederkehr* in which one aspect of our shame is no sooner investigated than the next is ready to take its place. An assiduous reader of surveys, who might manage to survive their indescribable tedium, might well be forgiven for concluding that the representative figure of our time was a kind of combination between Enoch Powell and Nikolai Stavrogin; he might even begin to worry why he was not more like him.

Even so, from time to time, the supply of

material begins to run short; with the best will in the world one cannot provide a new book of revelations every week. Yet the appetite for them, once stimulated, appears to be insatiable (at least in the editors, if not the readers, of our Sunday press), so that our moral and social investigations, having traversed (and for how many times!) the main thoroughfares, the M-1's, as it were, of our present discontents, are sometimes forced into their byways and country lanes.

*The Observer*, having temporarily exhausted, or having bored itself to death with, the potentialities of both the Affluent and the Sick Society, has now made the startling discovery that we are also a Sad Society, "an expanding world where there is a blight of previously neglected poverty: emotional poverty," and is now busily occupied with "a major series of interlinked reports" documenting "the broken heart of the problem of the new poor."

IT IS PERHAPS UNNECESSARY to point out that nothing could be sadder or sicker than the prose in which the *Observer* chooses to announce its new series; people who write like this should really be debarred by law from investigating other people's broken hearts until they have mended the cracks in their own. Karl Kraus long ago pointed out, in his unrelenting war against the *Neue Wiener Presse*, that the strongest symptom of the sickness of an age is the prose in which newspapers, especially "class" newspapers, write about it. It would perhaps be unfair to suggest that the prose of the *Observer's* announcement, sickly, tired and inflated, as of a Patience Strong or a Miss Lonelyhearts turned sociologist, exhibits precisely the kind of "emotional poverty" which forms the ostensible subject of its splendid new series. Yet one's suspicions are strengthened that its *dramatis personae* are once again those who have figured *ad nauseam* in our Sunday supplements in recent years; the drug addict, the homosexual, the alcoholic, the recidivist, the victims of broken marriages. Some people, the *Observer* tells us, are all of these things at the same time, forming a kind of composite Frankenstein monster of the *Observer's* own making, who I'm sure will one day talk to the *Observer* with the same "great freedom and frankness" as the subjects of its present series.

And of course the "new poor" are only too glad to be photographed by the *Observer*; only where have I seen those mournful, hangdog faces before, or faces very like them, unless in precisely similar series previously published in the *Sunday Times* or the *Observer* about the victims of our present society. In my wilder moments I sometimes dream that our more ex-

pensive Sunday newspapers maintain somewhere in their basements a permanent cast of characters selected for facial characteristics which can be used at any moment to illustrate a series on the Affluent, Sick, Sad Society. What's more, as the series roll interminably on, they're kept pretty busy; the job's no sinecure.

THE JUSTIFICATION for all this is, of course, the implied claim that the "new poor," the sad, the unhappy, the emotionally disturbed, are in some significant way representative of our society as they never have been of any other. I know of no method, either analytical or statistical, by which such a claim could be verified and indeed rather suspect that the reverse of it may be true; that in fact today society is characterised not by the number or the condition of those who live in emotional or material poverty, but rather of those to whom life offers a large degree both of emotional and material satisfaction.

To justify this impression would of course be just as impossible as to demonstrate its opposite; even today, despite all the efforts of our sociologists, both professional and amateur, the annals of the poor remain far too short and simple to provide any basis of comparison between past and present societies in respect of the degree of happiness or unhappiness suffered or enjoyed by the overwhelming majority of their members. It would be wiser perhaps to remember the Biblical injunction that the poor, new or old, are always with us. I wish indeed that present-day critics and investigators of society would sometimes read the Bible. It would provide them with far better Sunday reading than most of their own productions; it would almost certainly improve their prose style, except in cases where that is beyond repair; it might even remind them that the poor, more especially the poor in spirit, are promised a better fate than to provide the material for a Sunday supplement.

I AM PERHAPS unduly prejudiced against, and irritated by the *Observer's* free and frank revelations about the "new poor" because for the last month I have been living in the country, and what impresses one most there is not the miseries of human existence but rather the immense progress that has been made, particularly in recent years, in what is after all still Britain's largest single industry; it is a progress which is reflected not only in the condition of the land itself but in the lives of those who live by it.

Anyone who has read the Hammonds' *The*

*Village Labourer* will remember how almost unbearably constricted, both materially and spiritually, the lives of the rural poor once were, and history is full of the savage outbreaks of violence and despair to which they were repeatedly driven by their condition. Today, in this country at least, it is almost inconceivable that such things should have occurred; today, it is not the "new poor" who are in evidence on the land, but the new prosperity of the rural labourer and the genuine opportunities of satisfaction which it has brought him.

I myself, in my particular cottage, can hardly claim to share that prosperity. It is situated very nearly in the exact geographical heart of England, not thirty miles from the huge industrial conurbation of Birmingham and its neighbouring towns, and only one hour and twenty minutes by train from London. Yet there is no road to it, and it has neither electricity nor gas. My wife is a genuine object of commiseration to the farm labourers' wives who are our nearest neighbours because she has no refrigerator, no electric iron, no vacuum cleaner, most of all of course no television, all of which they regard as the indispensable minimum of a civilised existence.

Of course, for a city dweller, this primitive mode of life has priceless compensations. On all sides I look out on a landscape which, in its smiling greenery, at this moment broken by golden fields of corn, has a particular beauty that could not be found anywhere outside of England; every window frames a Constable, and as far as the horizon in every direction there is hardly an artefact to be seen that has not been a part of the landscape for at least two hundred years. Buzzards swoop overhead; at night badgers play in the wood and in warm weather bring out their bedding to air.

To the countryman of course, and especially to his wife, such things do not make up for the cottage's notable lack of consumer durables; entering a labourer's cottage today, as well equipped as if it were in the heart of London, one finds it hard to believe that not long ago most of them would have contained only a few sticks of furniture. The truth is that no labourer today would consent to live in my cottage, and that is the only reason why, at a time when the price of country cottages, and of land itself, is rising to what would once have seemed fantastic heights, I am fortunate enough to live in it.

Yet the life I lead there is in no way an isolated one, abstracted from the world of human activity. Even the peace and silence which reign there are, though real enough, also to some extent an illusion, for they disguise what is in fact a scene of intense industry. For

the countryside around us is alive, not only with the animal creation, but with every kind of agricultural machine, representing a large investment of capital which has to be made to work if it is to show an adequate return. Over the brow of the hill, on an early morning, suddenly appears a swarm of tractors, advancing like a troop of tanks going into action and fanning out to their tasks in various fields; for the last few weeks, in farm buildings where they have rested for the remainder of the year, huge combine harvesters have been carefully inspected and tested so that, when the harvest begins, they can in a few short days earn their keep for the rest of the year.

THIS TRANSFORMATION of the land, and of agriculture, in recent years seems to me a great and beneficent revolution, and it is no less striking because it has been a peaceful and gradual one. Among other things, it provides the best protection for the countryside, which we are only slowly coming to recognise as one of the most priceless of national assets; in the long run only a healthy and prosperous agriculture will save the countryside from the depredations of speculators and developers and the sometimes almost unbelievable philistinism of government departments and public authorities.

But it is not only the land which has been transformed; so have the lives of the men and women who work to make it productive. Machinery has changed agricultural labour from a life of arduous and unrewarding toil into a skill as advanced as any that is practised in the city, and has given the village labourer a leisure, and the means to enjoy it, which he has never known before. His intellectual horizons have broadened and the very nature of his work, as it is today, demands of him educational standards to which he could once never

have aspired. In their free hours today the village labourer and his wife look and behave like any city dweller, except that they remain slightly slower of speech and are less addicted to sartorial eccentricities; mini-skirts in the country are slightly less miniscule and girls pay greater attention to their appearance. To be dirty and unkempt is not regarded as a blow for freedom but as a breach of good manners which puts one out of the marriage market.

I must confess that in this kind of society I can detect few or no signs of the sickness or sadness to which the Sunday supplements attach so much significance. Certainly some people are unhappy but their unhappiness is no different in kind from what it has ever been. I sometimes wonder what the rural population make of their Sunday papers, to which they are much addicted, as children are to comics, news from such a foreign and fairy-tale country, whose manners and morals are utterly strange to them, but all the more fascinating because of that.

Does this mean then that the sickness which fascinates our modern diagnosticians of society is exclusively urban in origin and nature and that in this respect therefore there is now between town and country a greater gap than ever before? This is so patently untrue, and so utterly at variance with the growing assimilation between urban and rural patterns of life that it can safely be dismissed. The truth, I think, is rather otherwise; it is that except for a very narrow, confined, and essentially middle-class sector of urban society, in any community with which one comes into close contact today one is struck less by those "marks of weakness, marks of woe" which Blake once saw in every London street than by the evidence of an increase in happiness and satisfaction. Could it not be that sadness and sickness are very much in the eye of *The Observer*?

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# THEATRE

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## Worshipping the Life Force, Disliking Life

By John Weightman

IT IS INTERESTING that the National Theatre, whether by accident or design, should have timed its new presentation of *Back to Methuselah* to coincide more or less with the American moon-landing. Shaw's sermon in five, slightly dramatised parts is an attempt to say something about human life in the perspective of the universe. The production by Clifford Williams emphasises the point beautifully with the help of revolving globes, flickering electronic patterns and inter-stellar noises, which remind us at once of what we were watching on television only a few weeks ago. But on television, the welter of technology was not accompanied by any philosophical ideas. The incredibly brave astronauts seemed to be able to do what they did, precisely because they had no philosophy appropriate to their situation. Scientific wizards they may be, but the metaphysical part of their nature is frozen in the attitude of the good all-American boy who believes in the flag and goes unquestioningly to church on Sundays. And when President Nixon welcomed them back, he sounded uncannily like a Shavian caricature of a politician—like Joyce Burge, in fact, in Part II, *The Gospel of the Brothers Barnabas*. His famous remark about this being the greatest week since the Creation, which blithely missed out the Revelation he is officially supposed to believe in, would have seemed rather broad, if Shaw had invented it. And generally speaking, he was jolly and non-metaphysical to an astonishing degree.

*Back to Methuselah* provides a corrective. It is now fifty years old, and it was always a ramshackle extravaganza rather than the world classic Shaw hoped it might be, but at least it is still metaphysically apposite and forces us to reflect on the implications of these various spheres suspended so puzzlingly in space.

WHATEVER ONE MAY think of the doctrine that Shaw puts forward in his preface or in the different parts of his "Metabiological Pentateuch," there can be no doubt that he sees the

problem quite clearly. Man happens to find himself, on this tiny unit in the universe, as the provisional outcome of an evolutionary geological, biological, cultural, etc., process. He can trace some of its stages, but he does not know how or why it originated, or where it is going. This is the basic philosophical worry: What are we doing here? Then the process itself involves features which are scandalous to the human mind. Life feeds on life; man is hostile to man; creatures are "imperfect"; each individual life blooms and dies incomprehensibly; not to mention the fact that, independently of the physiological cycle, the physical world often haphazardly destroys the life it has created. This is the second philosophical worry: Why is life complicated by the various forms of evil?

Now an agnostic would maintain that, although man is naturally led to ask such questions and that they must form the background to any serious thinking about life, they are by definition unanswerable. Man is inside the universe as a given part of it, and it stands to reason that the part cannot understand the whole. The major religions claim, of course, that the whole has revealed something of itself to the parts, but the so-called explanations of religion—for instance, about this life being a trial run for Eternity or Nirvana—explain nothing at all, since they fail to tell us why a trial run should be necessary. The variety of religious invention is fascinating, but at best it merely serves to keep the basic questions alive in an atmosphere of poetic vibration. A cathedral looks like an assertion, but all those stones are just the obverse side of an interrogation.

Shaw, however, is not an agnostic, and *Back to Methuselah* would be his cathedral, if words were as solid as stones. Like Bergson, from whom he presumably borrowed his central concept of the Life-Force, he is the kind of person who cannot bear to leave the unanswerable questions unanswered. He wants to assert—indeed, his nature drives him to assert—and one of the pleasures of listening to his plays comes from the

fact that each brisk, intelligent sentence acts like a little injection of certainty. If I remember rightly, it was V. S. Pritchett who wrote somewhere that to experience Shaw's prose is like drinking gin; at first you feel elated and then, as the evening wears on, you wonder why the lift is becoming less and less noticeable. I think I now know. Shaw rejected the Christian revelation, only to fall back on to his own do-it-yourself religion, which is composed of scientific fact, biblical nostalgia and synthetic myth-making, and which is not up to the level of his general intelligence. In his best plays—in *Pygmalion*, say, or *The Apple Cart*—this religion is not obtrusive, and his profound impatience with life has not yet carried him out beyond the problems of ordinary living. *Back to Methuselah* is the least satisfactory of his major works, because it is meant as a direct expression of his religion, and he is sketching out gratuitous patterns which are hardly valid either as poetic allegory or as direct comment on life. They are chiefly interesting as a document about the mind of a man who couldn't rest in a state of unknowing.

PART I, *In the Beginning*, is a re-hash of the Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel stories, and is meant to say something about sex, pugnacity, and the life-process. These are obvious mysteries. Why, instead of enjoying total being, should each of us have only one sex, that is, be constantly looking for, or adjusting to, the supposed other half? Then, why should life be competition as much as cooperation, that is, why is nature red in tooth and claw?

On the first point, Shaw says that Lilith, the earth-mother, found the burden of total being too heavy to bear alone and so brought forth Adam and Eve, who could start the cycle of reproduction and death. Why did she find the burden too heavy? No answer. Why did Being to be inserted in Time, by means of sexuality and death? Again no answer. All we can be sure of is that Shaw *wants* to see life as a process with a meaning, because the Life-Force must be going Somewhere.

However, it is clear that he dislikes sex. When Eve is told about it by the Serpent, an expression of "overwhelming repugnance" comes over her face and she buries her head in her hands. In Part V, when evolution has reached an advanced stage, individuals are already sexually adult when born, and all the sexual business is over and done with by the time they are four. It is curious that Shaw should respect the Life-Force and have so little patience with the means that the Life-Force employs. His revulsion cannot be simply the reaction of an elderly man whose

glands have gone dead on him. The exasperation with sex runs through his work, and he himself contracted a *mariage blanc* when he was barely forty, and seems to have had comparatively little physical experience at any time. Possibly he looked upon the expenditure of energy in sex as a waste, because life has a Purpose, for which energy should be saved. This is to suppose (1) that sexual energy is always convertible into other, good activities, an assumption which is more than doubtful; and (2) that man should practice an economy which runs counter to the extraordinary wastefulness of the Life-Force in so many areas. Although Shaw behaves as if he believes in the Life-Force, at the same time he has an itch to correct its functioning.

A COMPARABLE AMBIGUITY is noticeable in his treatment of the struggle for life. He shows, Cain, the man of war, debating with Adam, who cultivates the arts of peace, and Cain, strangely enough, gets the better of the argument, although it is his destructiveness which jeopardises the future of mankind. The reason may be that Shaw is instinctively pugnacious and, in a sense, believes in the survival of the fittest or, at least, in the necessity of their dominion over the less fit. Part of him is still in sympathy with the amoral Darwinian Evolutionism, which he is trying so hard to overcome. His own literary technique is one of command and dismissal. He has a feeling for the great commanders and conquerors, Caesar, Joan of Arc, and Napoleon. When, in Part IV, the Long-Livers propose to eliminate the Short-Livers on the grounds of inefficiency, his defence of the latter, which is put into the mouth of a caricature of himself, is only half-hearted. Although he makes the parson in Part II say: "God counts foreigners," i.e., all individuals have their validity in relationship to the Life-Force, the Superman is still at the back of his mind and his approach is undoubtedly hierarchical. People with a lot of vitality are attractive to him, because vitality equals Life-Force, even when it is blind and ultimately suicidal. It is true that he hints at the paradox in the Napoleonic episode in Part IV, but he can hardly be said to deal with it adequately.

Another interesting twist is the implication that Abel deserved to be murdered, because it was he who first killed animals for food. Shaw's vegetarianism appears to have no medical foundation; it is based on metaphysical disgust at the fact that living creatures eat each other. For some human sensibilities—and I personally share the attitude—it is profoundly illogical, in other words evil, that animate nature should prey upon itself. Shaw thinks he can mitigate

the evil by sticking to vegetables,<sup>1</sup> which have no recognisable consciousness, but this is no more than a pathetic gesture in the face of the universal cannibalism of Nature. The Life-Force must have created the jungle, which is permanently shocking from the human point of view.

AS BECOMES ABUNDANTLY CLEAR after Part I, the Life-Force is itself a naïve and unsatisfactory concept. Bergson invented it, and Shaw adopted it, in order to escape from what the Existentialists were later to define as the awareness of contingency. Bergson imagined that the *élan vital* was injected into humanity by God from outside through the medium of saints and other great men, each of whom receives a partial revelation. In the end, the *élan vital* will work like leaven through the whole of mankind and men will become equal with God.

Shaw modified this slightly; his Life-Force is within creation and just happens to be using man as one of the possibilities of achieving its ultimate, undefined Purpose. The burden of the argument in Parts II, III, and IV is that man, if he is to survive, must turn himself into a higher species, and the first step is to get into the habit of living at least 300 years, so as to become sufficiently wise and experienced to settle political problems rationally. But how does one acquire the habit? Shaw, like Bergson, cannot make up his mind whether progress depends on God or on the human will. Bergson seems to think that it is the duty of ordinary men to make themselves receptive to the *élan vital*, but he never explains why we are not all equally receptive to it in the first instance, or why God doesn't pump in more *élan vital*, if more should appear to be necessary. Shaw, for his part, says three quite contradictory things: (1) if we want to live 300 years, our biological make-up will adjust itself spontaneously; (2) whether we want to or not, the Life-Force will select some of us to go on living; (3) if we don't extend our lifespan, the Life-Force will discard us and try to work through some other species. He might as

well say: "God may, or may not, have made it possible for you to lift yourself up by your own boot-strings, but if you don't, He will punish you for it."

IN FACT, I THINK this is what he is saying in the last resort. There is a good deal of God-hatred in him, as can be seen from certain episodes in *The Black Girl in Search of God*. And the Life-Force itself, although it is a form of the belief in God, is basically a tragic concept, since it involves putting one's faith in the forward movement—a pure abstraction, leading nobody knows where—because the incidental phenomena of existence are unsatisfactory. Part V is really very sad. Humanity has now achieved indefinite life, but death can still occur through a physical accident, because man has not conquered his contingent relationship to external natural forces and consciousness is still at the mercy of matter. If a Shavian Ancient, thousands of years hence, can be destroyed haphazardly by a falling tree, humanity is still stuck with the problem of the Lisbon earthquake that bothered Voltaire or the plague that bothered Camus. Politics no longer exist; love and art are juvenile activities, which the Ancients quickly abandon in order to reflect on the properties of the universe. But, in Part IV, Shaw had already dismissed scientific reflection on the universe as myth-destroying and anti-poetic, so what do the Ancients think about? They have still not been let into the secret of the universe, so they cannot be musing on that. I suspect that they are facing blank nothingness and wishing they were God, which is the position that most of us are in already, when we turn our gaze upon the ultimate mysteries. And if you are thinking about nothing, does it matter whether you do so for one year or a thousand?

My conclusion is, then, that *Back to Methuselah* is every bit as entertaining as a visit to church, and very similar. It ends, indeed, with a kind of pie-in-the-sky. "It is enough that there is a Beyond," intones the voice of Lilith, in the pseudo-poetic epilogue. It is amazing that Shaw could make the same sort of statement as the fish in Rupert Brooke's excellent poem:

"This life cannot be all," they swear,  
"For how unpleasant if it were!"

<sup>1</sup> His housekeeper reveals that he ate eggs. Fortunately for those of us who are squeamish about meat, eggs look like mineral objects.

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## NOTES & TOPICS

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Letter from Germany

### Artists & LSD

"HERE there are a lot of llamas... there is a giraffe... and here is a cowboy," the painter Heinz Trökes explained. He was not trying to reduce travel experience in Africa and America to a common denominator, but was under the influence of *LSD*, and was trying to explain (to Richard Hartmann) the picture he had just been painting.

Hartmann, whose subject of study is the marginal areas of art and artists on the margin of society, is a physician, the owner of a picture gallery in the Franz-Josef-Strasse in Munich, and himself a practising artist. In recent years he has put on several exhibitions devoted to "the art of the mentally ill" (not without continually emphasising that this is an equation between two unknowns). Then he changed course and experimented with artists who voluntarily took *LSD* under his supervision and then set about their usual work in these unusual circumstances.

The question is not new, and has always been in the background when explanations have been sought for the cultures of ancient Mexico, the pictures of Hieronymus Bosch, or the work of Baudelaire, but it can expect to rouse greater and probably more realistic interest at a time when a whole generation is taking "trips." What is the effect of hallucinogenic drugs on individuals credited in normal circumstances with a greater than normal sensibility, with a mental constitution not be judged by so-called commonsense standards? Is the effect of these drugs disturbing or intensifying to artistic creativity, or are they perhaps capable of helping a hitherto only moderately productive individual to manifest a shy genius? This last theory is the one most likely to gain public credence, though not unaccompanied by a slight shudder of discomfort.

The products which have now been exhibited at the Brumme gallery in Frankfurt are less extreme than preconceived theories based on excited imagination, and are not sensational enough to please the fanatics on either side. Nothing conclusive emerges from them, though they amount to more than a chance collection

of as many cases as the artists who took part. An experiment based on twenty artists can hardly claim to be scientifically conclusive; but the care with which Hartmann conducted it gives it a certain validity.

HE DEVOTED ABOUT a week to each case. In each instance the dosage was decided on only after long consultation and with regard to the individual's constitution, and he was present during the experiment and carefully recorded its progress. What happened when these artists took *LSD*? What happened to Hundertwasser, Hoehme, Goetz, Grzimek, Trökes, Hrdlicka, Häfner? How did they work with *LSD* and without it? Examples of both are hung in the exhibition at Frankfurt. In a minority of cases the reaction was extreme. The obviously very normal constitution of Friedrich Hundertwasser very successfully resisted the attempted interference with his robust imagination. He just felt sick. He refused to work in that condition, swore like a trooper, and declared that, so far as he was concerned, the experiment was over. There were also no visible results in the case of Gerd Hoehme. Severe pain at the back of his head (apparently of psycho-somatic origin attributable to war experience) made him incapable of working. Apart from these extreme individual reactions, however, some characteristic results were observable.

The least exciting outcome was when the effect on the artist's work was nil. The pictures painted by C. O. Goetz under the influence of *LSD* are indistinguishable from those he painted previously. More numerous are the cases in which greater differences are observable, and these can be sub-divided into those in which the difference is mainly formal and those in which it is mainly thematic. Alfred Hrdlicka, for instance, whose critically reflective drawings show him to be both an intellectual artist and a technical perfectionist, subsides into caricature; primitive shapes, drawn with crude gusto, emerge. In the case of the sculptor Waldemar Grzimek, the loss of form is even greater; in his attempts to draw a female figure, the anatomical details develop into problems insoluble with the charcoal pencil. An almost complete disappearance of the sense of form also leads to the collapse of Heinz Trökes' efforts to realise even partially on paper his freshly perceived fantastic world. The experience breaks down into its component parts; the impulse to epitomise a world of dissociated images is lost, and all that remains is a primary shape to which he clings with difficulty—a tremulous spiral.

But art did not in every case dissolve so harmoniously into its variegated components as it did in the case of Heinz Trökes, and the in-

dividual abstracted from himself and his abilities was not always compensated for the loss by a glimpse of better worlds (even if they were populated only by llamas, giraffes and cowboys). True, Heinz Trökes will no doubt have gladly paid the price of a new and unprecedented experience by having painted what for him were two bad pictures. When part of the experiment was repeated for television, Werner Schreib, to whom it was new, seemed unusually peaceable to those who knew him as otherwise slightly *exalté* and aggressive, and he chatted away happily while covering the paper with drawings. But to Manfred Garstka, for instance, the *LSD* experiment was a sheer nightmare. The attempt to master (by having recourse to art) the anxiety and the horrid visions that continually threatened to overwhelm him was a total failure, and he had nothing left with which to stave off some overpowering sense of doom. "I held fast to painting," he said afterwards, "for it was the only thing I had to cling to to save myself from total submergence in an inferno. I felt and suffered every kind of fear, menace and sense of annihilation on this 'trip'." The television viewer could see what it looked like in practice in the case of Eberhard Eggers. His tormented stammering and stuttering and the agonised effort with which he moved the pencil over the paper were far more

effective than any well-documented anti-*LSD* pamphlet—although that was hardly the intention.

Only two artists, Eberhard Eggers and Thomas Häfner, succeeded in keeping track of themselves, holding the pictures in their minds and transferring them to canvas, and in only one instance, that of Eggers, did the extension of mental experience involve a discernible increase in artistic ability. But, speaking generally, *LSD* does not seem able to make artists out of non-artists. It appears merely to lower the level of those who are artists already. This may have been a somewhat comforting experience to the artists and surely a disappointing one to would-be artists and to a public that would like to explain away the non-bourgeois world by its use of artificial stimulants (thus demonising it). After the results of this experiment, however, the complex and fluid artistic personality seemed to be so disturbed by the violent and uncontrollable intervention of drugs that it is thrown completely off the rails.

THE FACT THAT NONE of those who took part in the experiment afterwards regretted it, and that none of them would have missed it, is only superficially inconsistent with this, because after all sensitivity and susceptibility to stimuli are as much part of the artist's life as is the thick



HEINZ TRÖKES: *Before ... ... and After LSD*



skin of the normal user. The direct consequences of *LSD* intoxication are, after all, not the whole of the matter. To mention just one consideration, anyone who contemplates the tremendous explosion of colour (called not with-

out good reason "psychedelic") that is observable in all fields of art and near-art will agree that the question cannot, unfortunately, be dismissed with a simple positive or negative answer.

Petra Kipphoff

## "The Lonely Crowd," 20 Years After

By David Riesman

AT THE TIME *The Lonely Crowd* and *Faces in the Crowd* were published, we had no expectation that these books would be widely read outside the relevant academic fields. *The Lonely Crowd* was greeted in professional journals with often quite astringent criticism, and it made its way only slowly to a wider, non-professional audience. These non-professional readers need to be reminded that few scholars of even moderate sanity would sit down today to write a comprehensive, empirically oriented work like *The Lonely Crowd*. Studies of such scope are understandably out of style. Indeed, in some of the fields of scholarship on which *The Lonely Crowd* draws, including aspects of American history, probably as much specialised work has been published in the last twenty years as in all the preceding years.

When in 1960 the Yale University Press planned a new paperback edition of the book, I took the occasion to write a new preface to outline what seemed to me some of the main errors of the book, both as these might have been better appreciated at the time of writing and as they appeared in the glare of hindsight.<sup>1</sup> And now, almost a decade later, I have re-read *The Lonely Crowd* in preparation for a new printing. While making no changes of substance, so that any criticisms of the original edition a reader might

come across would still apply, I found myself on many pages writing marginal notes indicating that a statement now struck me as dubious, or extreme, or plainly mistaken.

This would not trouble me much, since knowledge proceeds by successive approximations and even by speculations which turn out to be wrong, if it were not for the fact that *The Lonely Crowd* has in some measure entered the picture many Americans—and some readers in other countries—have of ourselves, both past and present. In however small a degree, the book has contributed to the climate of criticism of our society and helped create or reaffirm a nihilistic outlook among a great many people who lay claim to moral or intellectual non-conformity, or who simply want to be "with it" in order to escape being considered geriatric cases. Since the preface of 1960 was written, the moral temper of well-educated young Americans has greatly altered, and so has the context of our common life; also my own thinking has continued to evolve; and thus I feel that some further cautionary remarks are in order.

OBVIOUSLY, THE PROBLEMS that preoccupy attentive Americans are different now from those preoccupying people when *The Lonely Crowd*

SOON AFTER *The Lonely Crowd* was published in 1950, it became a best-seller and one of the most influential sociological studies of contemporary American life. In his self-critical remarks two decades later, Professor David Riesman calls frank attention to the book's errors of argument and emphasis in the light of the current American mood. Yale University Press will shortly be publishing a new edition of *The Lonely Crowd*.

<sup>1</sup> Concurrently, Seymour Martin Lipset and Leo Lowenthal edited a book of criticisms of *The Lonely Crowd* and *Faces in the Crowd*, to which my collaborators and I were invited to submit a chapter of reconsiderations. Their collection, *Culture and Social Character: The Work of David Riesman Reviewed* (The Free Press, 1961), remains in our judgment the best source for the analysis both of the contributions and the limitations of our work. My contribution to the volume was written in collaboration with Nathan Glazer.

was written. Among the reflective, an atmosphere of what seems to me extravagant self-criticism has succeeded an earlier tendency toward glib self-satisfaction. In my opinion American society is not basically more evil and brutal than heretofore. In spite of war and preparation for war, and in the face of heightening racial tension, the lessening of bigotries described in *The Lonely Crowd* has continued; improved education and more liberal mass media have had an impact on traditional xenophobia. The fact that progressive measures, men, and attitudes have not brought peace at home or abroad keeps Americans polarised between our generous impulses and our fears.

Critics on the Right and Left have persuaded themselves that liberalism and progressive measures have dominated American society; this is a vast overstatement, ignoring that America has been dominated historically by unideological conservatism, with liberalism in the sense of contemporary welfarism and tolerance as a periodically influential minority tradition. Yet, because it has been believed that liberalism has been dominant, the sense of profound malaise so many Americans have about our society rests on the conviction that liberal measures have in fact been tried and have failed to dent our nearly insuperable problems. But that malaise also reflects our heightened expectations as to the society we should be and the contribution we should be making to the world. The beliefs we have about ourselves are also facts; they help shape our reality (this is the meaning of self-fulfilling prophecy about which Robert K. Merton and others have written). Measured despair of our society, expressed publicly, can serve to warn us against catastrophe and arouse us from somnolence. Extravagant despair, however, can lead some to withdraw from political and cultural action while others feel justified in acts of destructiveness and fail to grasp the potentials of non-violent change that do exist.

*The Lonely Crowd* has been read by many as arguing that Americans of an earlier day were freer and of more upstanding human quality. Developing a typology between "inner-directed"

and "other-directed," we focused on changes that most readers seem to have regarded as changes for the worse. But others have read the book as too benign in diagnosing our time. While we viewed both the American past and present with irony and ambivalence, readers tended to identify with the weaknesses they felt in themselves or in the people they knew; and they could regard the cruelties and insensitivities of earlier Americans with the sympathetic detachment we reserve for evils which no longer threaten to overwhelm us.

*The Lonely Crowd* certainly contributed to these misreadings. For example, the chapters on Politics fall at times into a nostalgia the book generally eschews. Thus it was an overstatement to say that cynicism toward politics as a whole was virtually unknown in the 19th century, and no less wrong to declare that the defined political problems of that epoch "were thought to be manageable."<sup>2</sup> Similarly, although it seems to me that the book's portrait of the 19th-century moraliser is as unflattering as that of the contemporary "inside dopester," the self-mockery to which contemporary readers are prone led many to assume that the latter was an invention of our own decadent era.

Several contributions to the Lipset-Lowenthal anthology contend that the ethic of egalitarianism and achievement has been characteristically American since the very beginning of the republic and that American character has not changed fundamentally.<sup>3</sup> In my opinion, whether one emphasises continuity or discontinuity should depend on what one is interested in, as well as on one's assessment of conflicting evidence. Of course there is a great deal of continuity; but I think that the upper-middle-class affluent American described in *The Lonely Crowd* and in *Faces in the Crowd* differed from his ancestors in the quality of his relations to others. Not that Americans today are more conformist—that has always been a profound misinterpretation. And it is not that today's Americans are peculiar in wanting to impress others or be liked by them; people generally did and do. The difference lies in a greater resonance with others, a heightened selfconsciousness about relations to people, and a widening of the circle of people with whom one wants to feel in touch. As the representatives of adult authority and of the older generation decline in legitimacy, young people and the millions who seek to stay young become even more exposed to the power of their contemporaries both in person and through the mass media. That focus of attention often leads to resistance and non-compliance, but the point at issue is primarily the degree of resonance, and not so much of conformity.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* (1965) and Joseph Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade* (1964), especially Chapter 7.

<sup>3</sup> See Seymour Martin Lipset, "A Changing American Character?"; also his *The First New Nation: The United States in Historical and Comparative Perspective* (1963); also Talcott Parsons and Winston White, "The Link between Character and Society," in Lipset and Lowenthal, eds., *Culture and Social Character*.

SINCE 1950 THE DECLINE in the weight and authority of adults chronicled in *The Lonely Crowd* has proceeded even further. Now attending high school and college are the children of the self-mistrustful parents who felt themselves revealed in books like *The Lonely Crowd*. The loss of inner confidence among adults is a world-wide phenomenon, reflecting rapid change in technology and values. Margaret Mead has spoken of native-born American parents feeling like immigrants in the country of the young. The young react to the loss of adult legitimacy with even greater self-mistrust, confusion, and rebellion. There are differences of degree, of course, so that while students from Tokyo to Prague take sustenance from each other's protests and learn from each other's tactics, the generational conflict is not everywhere the same. Indeed, the American student movements seem to me in some respects unique. South Africa may face a racial crisis in the future comparable to that of the United States, but the moral and intellectual priority this crisis now compels among sensitive whites as well as blacks is peculiarly American. The civil rights activities of earlier years provided the moral catalyst and much of the tactical experience later shifted to protests against the war and against colleges and universities. While students elsewhere protest against the war in Viet Nam, not even in Japan are they as directly engaged as are American young men who are compelled by the Draft to face ambiguous and intransigent moral quandaries.

A heightened sensitivity to such quandaries reflects among other things a shift since *The Lonely Crowd* was written toward a greater concern with autonomy and a rejection of adjustment as immoral compromise. There is also in our high and popular culture preference for anomie over adjustment, and a greater awareness of the anomie that does exist. This universal dimension of character remains significant even at a time when a putative shift from inner-direction

to other-direction might no longer be the best scheme for delineating the social character of upper-middle class Americans. Many young people presently appear to be impulse-directed or circumstance-directed far beyond what was true in the same social strata several decades earlier. Yet since no country—not even the United States—changes all at once, much that was said about contemporary social character in *The Lonely Crowd* still seems to me relevant. But what is more important is to continue work on the problem of social character itself. Little empirical work exists concerning what distinguishes the social character of one era or stratum from that of another. If one is to separate social character from ideology or behaviour, the vignettes we published in *Faces in the Crowd* suggest the need to use projective material. We can only understand our society if we are able to analyse both how people behave and talk and what their more fundamental and often unconscious dispositions are like, and how these are shaped by history and in turn shape history.<sup>4</sup>

*The Lonely Crowd* was one of a number of studies that used the content-analysis of children's stories, movies, fiction and inspirational literature as a way of assessing the attitudes of readers and audiences. Such work is inferential, involving a judgment as to what an audience might have seen in a work—and if that audience is deceased and no longer available for interview, the most exquisite content analysis remains speculative. My colleague David McClelland has made this kind of analysis of fantasy material as a clue to attitudes of earlier times into a fine though risky art.<sup>5</sup> Comparative studies of the audiences for popular culture are infrequent, although the files of market researchers must contain data capable of historical analysis. Currently it would be interesting to have some studies of the "talk jockeys" who, in giving air space to the previously voiceless, sometimes spread and sometimes combat the contagious paranoia of the powerless.

Public opinion polling has continued to improve, and we are more amply provided with repeatable and reliable surveys concerning who thinks what about Race, the Bomb, the war in Viet Nam, human happiness, the popularity of leaders, and who is believed to "run America." Even so, as many have noted, our indicators for unemployment and gross national product and other economic indices are better than our indicators for intangibles such as satisfaction in love and work, or for the latent feelings that have not yet been mobilised by cultural or political evocation.

But the indicators we have offer only modest help in assessing the larger political and cultural questions raised by the continuing increase in

<sup>4</sup> The concept of authoritarianism as developed in *The Authoritarian Personality* has perhaps been most fruitful in eliciting replication and re-analysis. But as many people have observed, the concept is unclear to begin with, lumping together a variety of traits found in a variety of social strata and historical settings. See, e.g., Riesman, "Some Questions about the Study of American Character in the Twentieth Century," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (Vol. 370, March 1967), pp. 36-47. I am indebted to Michael Maccoby for helpful discussion of this and related questions.

<sup>5</sup> See David McClelland, *The Achieving Society* (1961).

the gross national product and concerning the uses we make of our relative abundance. *The Lonely Crowd* made the assumption, somewhat novel at the time, that the economic problem of abundance had been fully solved on the side of production, if not on the side of distribution. The 1960 Preface dealt with what I concluded was the mistaken notion that economic work was no longer important and that we can afford the post-industrial attitudes now so widely prevalent. A great many others have spoken prematurely in this same vein, including the economist Robert Theobald and the critic Paul Goodman. John Kenneth Galbraith has probably been the most influential social critic to insist that the United States does not need more production, more affluence, but rather more "public" goods, such as cleaner air, streets, and water, instead of more quickly obsolescent "private" goods.<sup>6</sup> Undeniably, the pursuit of

production as an end in itself is pathological, although it is less socially dangerous than the pursuit of power as an end in itself.

Among the reasonably well-to-do, and especially among their children, American levels of consumption are often attacked as extravagant. Yet, given the political structure of the veto groups, it is hard for me to imagine how it will ever become politically possible to integrate the really poor inside America, let alone outside, without at the same time greatly raising the levels of living of lower (but not poor) socio-economic groups. That is, the still only insecurely affluent lower-middle and upper-working classes cannot be persuaded to be generous to the truly deprived, especially if these are black and obstreperous (even though the majority of the poor in America are white) if they themselves do not live on an ever-rising incline of consumer satisfaction. The poor, white and black, and their conscience-stricken affluent allies are minorities (and veto groups too, tactically effective in many local situations, with the power to create turbulence). But they are unable nationally to promote a juster distribution of rising resources. Indeed, tactical success is often gained at the expense of long-run strategic decline.<sup>7</sup> *The Lonely Crowd* did not take seriously enough the problem of con-

<sup>6</sup> See John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (1958). See also my essay, "Leisure and Work in Post-industrial Society," in Eric Larrabee and Rolf Meyersohn, *Mass Leisure* (1958), reprinted in Riesman, *Abundance for What? and Other Essays* (1964), pp. 162-83.

<sup>7</sup> See my article, "America Moves to the Right," *New York Times Magazine*, 27 October 1968.

## **Al-gé-rie Fran-çaise**

How did de Gaulle really handle it?

## **The Pound Franco in Your Pocket...**

The devaluation of Harold Wilson.

He has a copy of Machiavelli's *Il Principe*, annotated by Napoleon.

## **The Terror of Balance**

Khrushchev, Kennedy and Cuba.

Just a few of the issues in

# **The Masters of Power**

by Brian Crozier

## **Flower Power**

The 'one hundred flowers' policy of Mao Tse Tung.

Eyre & Spottiswoode  
18th September, 60s.

tinuing the expansion of resources to moderate the envies and resentments of the morally indignant not-quite-poor.

I HAVE BEEN a member of the "National Commission on America's Goals and Resources" of the National Planning Association, whose work suggests that in order to cope with the demands the American economy already makes on itself to deal with poverty in the ghetto and elsewhere, we need vastly expanded production, in addition, of course, to a shift away from spending on war and preparation for war. The Commission tried to cost the goals so far generally accepted as legitimate, such as the greatly increased health care, welfare, better housing, control over pollution, etc., that we seek. To achieve these, even if the war in Viet Nam were to be ended, would greatly exceed even our massive production in the foreseeable future—and without attention to the demands for aid among the developing countries.<sup>8</sup> Contrary to what I once thought, the economy is not self-propelling. We can see in Britain the problems that arise when a society becomes psychologically post-industrial long before the economic infra-structure is sound enough to bear the weight of steadily rising expectations. The most talented young Americans are continuing to avoid careers involved in any way with production and economic affairs, and they are also now avoiding careers in the physical sciences (other than medicine). These are regarded as lacking in "meaning."<sup>9</sup> Yet our increasingly sophisticated economy demands both more conscientious work and more free-wheeling imagination than it may get if young people's concept of management is one of a career for stooges, for "organisation men."

*The Lonely Crowd* contributed to the snobbish deprecation of business careers by underestimating the intellectual component of much work in complex organisations in its discussion of the shift from craft skill to manipulative skill. To move away from physical towards conceptual manipulation and away from working

with things towards working with people should not have been seen as a deterioration. Large corporate business today depends much more on ideas and less on brute trial-and-error than was the case earlier. And *The Lonely Crowd* did point out the greater sensitivity and lower tolerance for exploitation in our corporate life. Yet, as always, such advances give rise to new problems. Our greater awareness of the fact that men are interdependent has led to a greater awareness of the manipulative relations that remain. In a larger population, the massiveness of the organisations in which men work and their greater distance from the end-product do give rise to feelings of unreality for many professional and white-collar employees. Abundance, although unevenly distributed, allows those who possess it to demand meaning in their work and to be dissatisfied with mere subsistence, and the relative lack of challenge that abundance produces makes it harder for many to find such meaning. In an earlier (and, in some respects, more innocent) day, Americans were often exploitative without realising it, or without caring one way or the other. They wanted results, and did not yet seek "meaning" as such.

A generation ago, Joseph Schumpeter talked about the withdrawal of affect from the entrepreneurial system. As children of the affluent renounce greed as a motive as well as traditional work-mindedness, they may find it hard to discover other more liberating sources of commitment. I see many young people today who expect to *fall* into a commitment or into an identity or into a meaning for their lives, the way romantic young people expect to fall in love. They are unwilling, often, to extend themselves in order to find themselves. With the continuing decline in the legitimacy of adult authority, the hegemony of the peer group has continued to increase. In terms of social character, this may involve some measure of "other-direction." But the others to whom one responds tend to be drawn from a narrow circle of intimates; hence there has not been an increase in other-direction in its aspect of openness to others. Tolerance and openness are extended only to small, marginally connected networks, whose norms include intolerance towards others outside the networks.

A SMALL MINORITY of this minority has thrown itself into politics, finding in the anti-War, Civil Rights, and anti-University movements a new secular religion and often a new family; for they are freer than heretofore of their parental families, their ethnic or religious backgrounds and local neighbourhoods.<sup>10</sup> It seems likely that

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Leonard A. Lecht, *Manpower Needs for National Goals in the 1970's* (1969), a publication of the National Planning Association.

<sup>9</sup> For some, the rejection of the physical sciences reflects the fear that they are irrevocably linked with military domination. But the revolt against modernity extends to subjects like economics, and in some measure to any quantitative rational work.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Kenneth Keniston, *The Young Radicals: Notes on Committed Youth* (1968); also Keniston, *The Uncommitted: Alienated Youth in American Society* (1965). Although, in one perspective, members of the (pro-Goldwater Republican) Young

a varying proportion of this minority live with the awareness that nuclear weapons may destroy the human enterprise itself, reinforcing their profound anxiety and mistrust and their sense of historical discontinuity.<sup>11</sup>

I HAVE BEEN CONCERNED with the nuclear danger since Hiroshima and have given it first priority in my capacity as a citizen. People easily become obsessed with this danger (for example, deciding not to bring any children into so precarious and terrible a world), just as I have seen other people distracted from all else by their preoccupation with other social cruelties, injustices, and stupidities. *The Lonely Crowd* advocates the morally and practically difficult enterprise of living at once on two levels: that of ideals and even utopian visions, and that of day-to-day existence. Our daily life and our idealism must nourish and speak to each other. Against this, there has been a strong and at times fanatical tradition in America that the autonomous person must be a prophet and act on his convictions with minimal regard for personal and social consequence—a tradition at odds with the pragmatism which is also admired. The autonomous person too briefly delineated in the last chapter of *The Lonely Crowd* was someone with the ability and boldness to see straight, whether or not he had the courage or the power to act on his perceptions. Most of us are not heroes or saints, and if we insist that men must always act on their ideals, this may mean either that the ideals will be modified to suit the degree of one's courage and energy, or that individuals will become cynical about themselves or deluded about their society or both. Thus, this characteristically American belief that one must not only see straight but be sincere and act straight may at times give hegemony to the complacent, at other times to those capable of great moral outrage and dedication. My collaborators and I, both when we wrote *The Lonely Crowd* and still today, take a more benign and non-violent view of what is possible historically. We believe that the best hope for change in the direction of our ideals does not lie in efforts at total improvement in oneself and in society but in patient work towards incremental change in the light of a tentative sense of many possible futures.

Americans for Freedom seem tied to traditional backgrounds, their evangelical fervour is untraditional, just as Keniston's young radicals are sometimes carrying out parental mandates with an unparental evangelism.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Robert Jay Lifton, *Death in Life: Survivors of Hiroshima* (1968).

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# The Uses & Abuses of History

## On Thinking about the Past

By Max Beloff

THE SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS that currently afflicts the historical profession is partly self-induced: a result of the real intellectual difficulties that confront the practising historian particularly in relation to recent history—and partly a reaction to the attacks made upon history by the followers of other and more fashionable disciplines or would-be disciplines. On the one side are the philosophers, questioning the very possibility of historical knowledge and raising important problems about subjectivity, the nature of causation, and so forth; on the other hand there are the sociologists and other social scientists who believe that the present can be directly apprehended, and that the past is only worth studying in relation to the present and through categories that arise from present preoccupations. Outside all intellectual groupings are the young nihilists who think that since the world can be remade tomorrow time spent on the past is time lost, and so-called practical men like that arch-philistine Mr. Edward Short who believes that there is something meaningful in the remark that it is more important to know about Viet Nam than about the Wars of the Roses.<sup>1</sup>

It is perhaps encouraging that historians are now prepared to pronounce about the purpose, validity, and methods of their own studies.

MAX BELOFF is the author of historical studies in half-a-dozen various fields: 17th-century England, constitutional history, the American Revolution, Soviet foreign policy, and the Age of European Imperialism. He is Gladstone Professor of Government and Public Administration at Oxford and a Fellow of All Souls.

They may do so in a common-sense—Johnson refuting Bishop Berkeley—style like Professor Geoffrey Elton.<sup>2</sup> Or they may show themselves adept at analysing the philosophers' own concepts and profiting by their insights.<sup>3</sup> There is, it would seem, a fair degree of agreement today, at any rate in the Western intellectual community, as to what are the benefits, limitations, and dangers of historical studies, what historians can reasonably claim about the status of historical knowledge, and to what extent the historical dimension is relevant to the world of practice. When the Master of Sidney Sussex College comes to write a little volume on "The Aims of History" for the undergraduate or the sixth-former, he can make statements to which most of the historical profession would give assent.<sup>4</sup>

One says "Western intellectual community" with some reservations; for even as between the principal nations that one includes, there are very considerable differences both in general attitudes towards historical studies and in the areas of current concentration in respect

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Short's remark is quoted in the preface of Professor Charles Wilson's volume of essays, *Economic History and the Historian* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 50s.). The fact that someone with Mr. Short's intellectual limitations can hold the post of Secretary of State for Education and Science is deeply disquieting for those who care about either education or science; but that is another subject.

<sup>2</sup> G. R. Elton, *The Practice of History* (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1967; London: Methuen).

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, the thoughtful volume by Professor Gordon Leff, *History and Social Theory* (Merlin Press, 35s.).

<sup>4</sup> David Thomson, *The Aims of History* (Thames & Hudson, 18s.).



of research—notably but not exclusively in contemporary history, where different kinds of material are available to a markedly different extent, and where different constraints exist of a moral or political kind.<sup>5</sup> But the differences between the West as a whole and the Soviet bloc are very much greater.

A minor but not insignificant reason for the difference where Soviet Russia itself is concerned is that history (apart perhaps from the books about the military exploits of the Russians in World War II) is not read for pleasure or general intellectual stimulation by the Soviet reading public but is left severely to professionals of the subject. In the West, on the other hand, the writings of professional historians for each other must be taken alongside the volumes they write for a wider public; and this literature in turn merges into the output of writers who would not claim to be professionals themselves and are content to be *vulgarisateurs* at different levels of accomplishment.

IT IS TRUE THAT there are those who would draw a rather sharp line between modern “scientific” professional history and anything else, particularly anything that claims attention primarily on literary merit. Professor Elton goes so far as to dismiss such earlier historians as Clarendon, Gibbon, and Macaulay as having written “in the prehistoric age” and thus having lacked the opportunities which “we markedly lesser men enjoy.” But whatever distinctions may be drawn, the fact that history is still read for other purposes than professional ones and that an important historical work is still adjudged partly by the canons of art, cannot but influence the whole tone of historical writing.<sup>6</sup> In Britain this may partly be because of the continued vogue of political biography which Pro-

fessor Elton does not accept as a branch of history, which is indeed quite frequently written by non-historians but which historians cannot, of course, afford to neglect.<sup>7</sup>

More important is the fact that Western historians profess (even if they do not always live up to it) a belief in the autonomy of history, that is to say in the proper freedom of historical inquiry from any subservience to a particular national or party objective:

the autonomy of historical investigation—that is its pursuit and achievement for the sake of the truth alone and not in order to serve or support or defend any system of thought or of politics—is indispensable for its vitality (David Thomson).

Those responsible for guiding intellectual life in the Soviet Union must of course take the very opposite view: “a historian is not a dispassionate reporter who identifies facts or even places them in a scientifically valid pattern. . . . He is a fighter who sees his goal as placing the past at the service of the struggle for communism.” His purpose is to promote “a firm conviction of the inevitability of the triumph of communism.”<sup>8</sup> What this meant in terms of suppression and distortion of facts in the Stalinist period is well enough known. Writing early in 1966 it was possible to argue that Soviet historians were better than their principles should have allowed them to be and that much good work was being done even on relatively modern periods; though it is a little chilling to be told that in the history of agricultural collectivisation which is now an important area of concentration, “the hardships suffered by the population are not prominent among the topics of research. . . .” And even an author who takes what he regards as an optimistic view about the capacity of Soviet historians to free themselves from the subservience to immediate political imperatives cannot but note that the more recent revision of Russian economic history seems to have been undertaken so as to show the similarities between Russia on the eve of revolution and the current conditions in underdeveloped countries with the implication that Russian experience is the most “relevant and instructive for contemporary developing countries.”

ONE REASON FOR THE greater sophistication of Soviet historians today is to be found in their obviously greater acquaintance with trends of historical and philosophical inquiry in the West. And this is presumably a partial justification for the refusal of the Western historical community to regard their distance from the Soviet historians’ ideological position as an impediment to collaboration on the scholarly plane. Soviet habits in this as in other fields do not make

<sup>5</sup> This fact came out very clearly in the symposium on the current state of writing in contemporary history held under the auspices of The Institute of Contemporary History and Wiener Library. The papers are published in D. C. Watt (ed.), *Contemporary History in Europe: Problems and Perspective* (Allen & Unwin, 60s.).

<sup>6</sup> The elevation of Dame Veronica Wedgwood to the Order of Merit—the first historian to be so honoured since the late G. M. Trevelyan—suggests that the traditional narrative historian is still (and, to my mind, rightly) given the first place in public esteem.

<sup>7</sup> One thinks, for instance, of the great biography of Joseph Chamberlain begun by J. L. Garvin and now triumphantly terminated by Mr. Julian Amery (Macmillan, £12).

<sup>8</sup> Academician B. N. Ponomarev quoted by Arthur P. Mendel in “The Current Theory of Soviet History: New Trends or Old,” in the Watt volume, p. 263.

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cooperation easy. But the International Congress of the Historical Sciences has had the collaboration of the Russians for a good many years and the next big Congress under its auspices is scheduled for next year in Moscow itself. The British historians decided after the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia that they would not attend as a national group; though individuals may be present.<sup>9</sup> It is perhaps typical of the situation that Britain was the only Western country to take this line; elsewhere the argument seems to have been that this was a "political matter." The real question of the possibility of fruitful cooperation at a scholarly level with historians who have to accept as dogma the pronouncements of political authorities, and to work within the bounds of a single and constraining intellectual doctrine, with historians who cannot therefore accept the ultimate primacy of the brute fact, remains unexplored.

It should of course be of much greater professional interest to historians than the wickedness of the Soviet government which they argue to be none of their business; for the same problem confronts them in a different form in the shape of Western historians of the Marxist persuasion who while not under the same physical constraints as their Soviet colleagues, accept some of the same intellectual assumptions, though at different levels of sophistication.

THE MARXIST HISTORIANS do, of course, suffer from one obvious disadvantage, namely that they cannot be fully consistent. If they fully accept the Marxist sociology of knowledge then in a class-bound society—i.e., in all societies that have so far existed—truth is out of reach. They cannot therefore claim for history the scientific status that Marxism itself postulates. There is the further difficulty (which Gordon Leff underlines) that the Marxist philosophy of history, resting as it does upon the

distinction between the economic foundations and the "super-structure," places the motor of historical development in the changing modes of production and hence outside what is fully accessible to the historian.

Most Marxist historians tend to ignore the former dilemma but get impaled upon the horns of the latter. For they cannot always make the case on the basis of accessible and verifiable facts for the necessary belief that all aspects of an historical period are linked together by their relation to a class-struggle, itself the product of an economic system which must be postulated as uniform.

It is the attempt to fit the history of the 17th century in England into a mould which will make it appear that all its aspects from constitutional change and government to religious and scientific thought are conditioned by the rise of a new bourgeoisie that Professor Wilson uses as an example of what should be avoided when he deals with the Master of Balliol's *The Century of Revolution* in an essay entitled "Economics and Politics in the Seventeenth Century." Elsewhere he uses both British and Dutch history in order to show that to make full use of the insights given by economic history into the "mercantilist" period, it is necessary to accept the *autonomy* of technical developments, fiscal policy, and of politics itself as well as the so-called "historic interests" of particular classes and groups.

But the Marxist approach is not unique nor perhaps (since its difficulties and limitations are well-understood, and some of its practitioners in this country—Christopher Hill himself and Dr. Eric Hobsbawm, for example—are very considerable scholars) is it the most dangerous of alternatives to the traditional concentration on establishing the actual course of events. It is sociology and its impact upon historical writing that gives greater cause for worry. For the writing of history in terms of abstractions or "ideal types" may, as Professor Leff shows in the case of Max Weber and the "Protestant Ethic," lead to the historian committing the offence "of isolating from his material those elements" which support "his own constructs of ideal types."<sup>10</sup> In the hands of less eminent men than Weber, the history written and relied upon by sociologists ceases to have a direct relation with the lives and deeds and thoughts of actual men.

It is sometimes [Professor Wilson writes] difficult to avoid the impression that the new sociology is but the old allegory writ large (though not necessarily more clear). The characters have changed. Fellowship, goods, knowledge, discretion, good deeds have gone: in their place is a new set of abstractions...collectivism, in-

<sup>9</sup> Mr. A. J. P. Taylor, who was to go as an individual member, announced in the *Sunday Express* (27 July 1969) that after the Brooke-Kroger exchange he no longer thought it safe to do so. It seems curious that it should have taken till the Brooke case for Mr. Taylor (who has had his clashes with Communist historians before) to discover that the rule of law is not a feature of the Soviet scene and that *habeas corpus* is not something to rely on in that part of the world. Or does the fact that Soviet history is not Mr. Taylor's special beat entitle him to disclaim what is common knowledge among non-historians?

<sup>10</sup> Reading Professor Wilson's book has made me aware for the first time of some strictures of his against a book I wrote thirty years ago under the influence of both the Marxist and the Weber-Tawney models of the 17th century. *Mea culpa*.

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dividualism, activist social, commodity Hedonism, urbanisations, capitalism.

IT MAY BE ARGUED that this is only one aspect of the impact of sociology, and that there is another side to it, where what it gives is access to new series of concrete facts which in the end will help in the direct apprehension of the historical scene, in the manner of the *Annales* school in France. In the hands of a master of historical description like Fernand Braudel this technique can produce rich results.<sup>11</sup> But the idea that a multiplication of discrete facts and of statistics, collected by teams of individuals, can somehow be manipulated to give answers to problems that the mere historian cannot tackle seems an improbable one.<sup>12</sup> One has the feeling that this affection for statistics is not something that historians have developed for themselves out of the contemplation of their own subject-matter but an obeisance to what is thought to be the superior academic status of those subjects that have a mathematical aspect. Historians who can lay claim to numeracy aspire to the same reverence as used to be accorded to learned men who had mastered the ancient languages.

Professor Elton is right to remind us that the economic historian and demographer who must perforce rely on statistics must also be aware that before about 1800 many of the principal series that he requires cannot be regarded as more than speculative. But it is even more important to be aware of the trap that awaits those who seek for figures not where they are clearly important where they can be obtained (as in economic history and demography) but where they are given importance because they are obtainable.

In his essay in the Watt volume, "The 'New' Political History," Professor Allan J. Bogue sets out, admittedly in a rather less arrogant fashion than is common to "behavioural scientists," the claim made for the "behavioural approach" to the history of American politics. The difficulty here is that almost the only political material that lends itself to statistical treatment is material on elections; so that the "new" political history comes to be the history of party voting patterns. Of course this has its uses—largely negative ones (as when Professor

<sup>11</sup> Since I believe that a "Third Programme" broadcast of mine was the first assessment by a British historian of Professor Braudel's masterpiece on the Mediterranean world, I hope I shall not be thought prejudiced against the *Annales* school as such.

<sup>12</sup> Professor Elton (p. 27) has some good things to say about Mr. Keith Thomas' notorious article in the special history number of the *Times Literary Supplement* (7 April 1966).

Lee Benson did some pioneering work in destroying some too easy stereotypes about Whigs and Democrats in the Jacksonian period). But political history is *not* the result of the behaviour of measurable aggregates but of active political leaders working on the masses as their raw material. The danger of the "behavioural approach" is that, as its technique becomes more refined, what it deals with becomes of more and more marginal interest—a sophisticated form of the mere "antiquarianism" which professional historians are always so anxious to disclaim. The "behavioural scientists" would appear to believe that "nothing is knowable that cannot be measured"; one is sometimes exasperated enough by them to think of replying, "nothing that can be measured is important enough to be worth knowing."

WHERE THE HISTORICAL PROCESS and the historian's understanding are concerned we seem, then, to be coming back to something like an agreement that the fundamental thing is the dialogue between the historian and his material leading to the establishment of narrative accounts within a time dimension of the major human experiences of the past. What mainly divides professional historians is the extent to which one can say "this was *because* of this," rather than just this came *after* this. Professor Leff can talk of the "tenuousness of the connections that the historian seeks to establish between events to make them intelligible," Professor Wilson of the "close texture of causation." Professor Elton would appear to think that these are matters for the philosopher and warns us against the easy way out of substituting "factors" for "causes." All would agree that the individual, though inaccessible without a knowledge of his environment, is an agent as well as a victim of the historical process.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Professor Elton defends what seems to me a quite unreal distinction between the public and private lives of public figures as subjects for historical study. It does not matter that Henry VIII was a bad husband; was he a good king? But how can one draw the line? At the moment of writing the United States seems largely preoccupied with the problem of whether the conduct of a leading senator in relation to a banal (if tragic) motoring accident is likely to rule out his candidacy for the President and what impact his removal from the next contest might have on American political parties, the race question, the struggle between the generations, and so forth. Perhaps the popular instinct that private life *does* matter is more reliable than the distinctions made in Cambridge cloisters. Those "prehistoric" historians, Clarendon, Gibbon, and Macaulay, would never have accepted Professor Elton's academic innocence in such matters.



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But the problems with which the historian is faced today do not end with those posed by the philosophers or the social scientists. If he knows *how* to study history, there remains the question of *what* history to study. The methods he uses (and this applies on both sides of the Iron Curtain) have been worked out in relation to the history of the Western world. Is this enough when some of those for whom he writes have to deal with problems in areas whose history has largely been separate from our own? "Historians in America," we are told, "have been like historians elsewhere, patriotic, genetically oriented and culture-bound..."<sup>14</sup> They must learn to get to grips with the problems of the history of other civilisations, even of those which are themselves not historically minded in our Western sense. That Professor Fairbank is right at some level of historical thinking is unquestionable; but this does not mean that the present vogue for courses in world history as being more "relevant" than the history of one's own country has much to recommend it.

Professor Fairbank is well aware of the difficulties—above all the linguistic difficulties that confront the would-be student. In the case of Russian history which was until very recently also somewhat on the periphery of our studies, the difficulty can to a considerable extent be met by translations of the basic texts. But for China this is obviously insufficient; no Chinese, no Chinese history!

But what makes one pessimistic is that even where language is no real impediment, the difficulties of getting to grips with the history of any foreign country are very considerable indeed, and perhaps becoming more so, particularly for Americans whose output of writing on so much of the world is becoming so vast that it is possible for the student to live a quite rich historical life without once venturing intellectually outside the United States.<sup>15</sup>

In Britain we still have those to whom this restriction does not apply. Sir Denis Brogan and Mr. Richard Cobb can sufficiently assimilate themselves to the French scene to take sides on local historical controversies (see "Accepting the Revolution" on another page of this num-

ber). And Sir Denis is, of course, equally at home in the minutiae of the American past. But most of us are not so happily placed. Dr. David Thomson, for instance, can use French examples of the points he makes with telling effect. But we then find him using as a good example of the beneficial impact of the economic approach upon traditional political and constitutional history, Charles Beard's *Economic Interpretation of the American Constitution* (1913) in seeming ignorance of the fact that subsequent researches have left very little standing of Beard's once impressive edifice. If a British historian can be unaware of the development of so important a theme in American history, what can he be expected to know of Russian, let alone Chinese history?

The danger here is that the "Whig" interpretation—the assessment of the past in terms of a progress to the presumably glorious and inevitable present—against which we are so careful to warn undergraduates in respect of British history can quite easily rear its head again in respect of foreign history. Because the Bolsheviks won the struggle for power in Russia, the history of 19th-century thought is studied in terms of looking for the precursors of Bolshevism and (as Leonard Schapiro emphasises in his article in this ENCOUNTER) many of its most interesting figures are neglected in consequence, and the course of Russian history distorted. In principle the historian must try to escape from the bias implicit in his own nurture; but he must learn to live with the fact that he cannot hope to escape very far.

HAVING IN MY TIME attempted American, French, and Russian history, I have had to face some criticism for an apparent retreat back to British history. Increasing awareness of the difficulties of an adequate degree of immersion in any history but one's own—for physical as well as intellectual reasons—is perhaps the best excuse I have to offer. But I would certainly argue that it is only within a framework with which one acquires such measure of intimacy that the really crucial questions can be asked. As Professor Leff writes of the historian:

His account of the past is... shaped by what he knows to have resulted without sacrificing the conditions which helped to engender it. His starting-point is the very discrepancy—which Dilthey attempted to discard—between what men believed they were doing and what they did.

And this is not, as he says, a matter of reducing everything to ideology but the recognition of the fact that the historical agent lacks even

<sup>14</sup> John K. Fairbank's "Assignment for the '70's," being the Presidential Address for 1968-9 to the American Historical Association. *American Historical Review* (February 1969), p. 867.

<sup>15</sup> A book by an American historian who has himself done important original work on Germany can cover the world-wide phenomenon of Nationalism and confine his footnote references almost exclusively to the American literature. Louis L. Snyder, *The New Nationalism* (Cornell University Press, 1968).

the partial omniscience of the historian. The leaders of Britain during the period of the decline of Empire—my present subject—did not work for the decay of Empire into Commonwealth, or of Commonwealth into chaos; but what they did attempt is part of the story along

with what happened. To try and find out how the real and imaginary interacted is the kind of thing which (whether successful or not) is the historian's most useful contribution to making the world intelligible; and this, after all, is his ultimate business.

## Revolutionary Turning-Points

By Maurice Ashley

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY has seen a reassessment of the revolutionary epoch in British history that occurred 300 years ago. Since Gardiner and Firth wrote their political histories of England (completed by Godfrey Davies and David Ogg, and supplemented by the work of J. R. Tanner) the origins and course of the revolutions of 1640–1653 and of 1688–1689 have been subjected to close analysis and controversial argument. There is scarcely a British or American university where modern history is taught which does not support a pundit on 17th-century English history. The University of East Anglia, to give one example, has two professors who are each expert in this subject and divide their teaching at the year 1649. It seems almost incredible that anything should be left to be said or to be discovered and yet month by month the books still flood out—including even such an impressive list of dates as Neville Williams' *Chronology of the Expanding World*.<sup>1</sup>

What are the differences of emphasis and approach which colour the study of this subject today as compared with the period nearly a century ago when S. R. Gardiner began his pioneering research? Gardiner himself was a non-conformist and he was moved by Victorian religious conceptions and by Victorian liberalism; he was awarded a civil list pension by Mr. Gladstone for his devoted historical writing, and stuck closely to a chronological method of investigation. The result was (as Roland G. Usher showed) that Gardiner's ideas about the English nation, the English constitution, and even some of the characters in English history were often inconsistent. But, on the whole, he

portrayed the revolution as a national outbreak against a king who had perverted the constitution and given his patronage to a High Church clergy trying to hold back the Puritan tides. The emphasis was, therefore, political and religious. To modern historians, however, the problem that has presented itself is why could not the differences between Charles I and his parliaments have been compromised? The King was willing to offer concessions, to sacrifice his ministers, to repudiate his own conduct, as, for example, in the levying of ship money, and to accept restraints upon his sovereignty. Professor Wilson H. Coates has spoken of the emergence of politics and economics as "independent disciplines" as well as of a scientific revolution and other factors combining to complicate the problem of determining human motivation in the 17th century. And certainly it has been an emphasis on the importance of economic and social factors which has been characteristic of much writing on this subject. Both Christopher Hill and Hugh Trevor-Roper, approaching the matter from rather different angles, have tended to minimise the significance of purely religious antagonisms and have looked at the revolution from the standpoint of social structure.

Another influence upon the study of 17th-century history in modern times has been that of the late Sir Lewis Namier. The parliaments of James I and Charles I have already been subjected to a minute analysis of the kind that he favoured and at present, under the direction of Professor Basil Henning, the membership of Charles II's parliaments is undergoing a similar sort of scrutiny. Thus it may be said that the structure of society and the character of parliaments have been examined in order to assess the causes of the bloody revolution of 1642 and the bloodless revolution of 1688; and

MAURICE ASHLEY is the author of many works on 17th-century English history, including "Great Britain to 1688" (1961, Cresset) and "The Glorious Revolution of 1688" (1966, Hodder). His "The Golden Century" was published this year by Weidenfeld.

<sup>1</sup> *Chronology of the Expanding World, 1492–1762*. By NEVILLE WILLIAMS. Barrie & Rockliff: The Cresset Press, 70s.



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this has tended to minimise the religious aspect and has permitted the drawing of parallels between the British events and the great upheavals of later times such as the French, Russian, and Chinese revolutions in which historians have detected primarily social causes. The emphasis has in fact moved away from constitutional and religious history towards economic and parliamentary history. New classes such as an "industrious" class and a "declining gentry" or "backwoodsmen" have been discerned hard at work in the 17th century undermining the earlier constitution of political society.

Mr. Stuart E. Prall in a perceptive introduction to a collection of documents or extracts from documents, just published<sup>2</sup> and defiantly called *The Puritan Revolution*, describes how to two "variations on the same theme" (provided by the late Professor Tawney and Hugh Trevor-Roper) Christopher Hill has added a more thoroughgoing Marxist touch. He writes:

For Hill the Revolution was the point in English history when the new industrial and commercial capitalist bourgeoisie went to war to supplant the landed feudal interest. Hill's theme was developed during the 1930s and has proved to be very short-lived, being abandoned by its own author in the 1960s. In his recent survey of seventeenth-century English history Hill has gone back to the old theme of court *versus* country: a theme that Trevor-Roper was actually expounding under a different name, and that both Gardiner and Tanner had been developing in their own ways.

In a series of books Christopher Hill has stressed the secular side of the revolution from which the adjective Puritan has been carefully subtracted. In his *Economic Problems of the Church* (1956) he suggested some of the non-theological reasons which might lead men to oppose the Laudian régime in the English Church, and in his book *Society and Puritanism* (1964) he outlined in a highly ingenious way a number of reasons why the Church was unpopular with the Puritans quite apart from its theological or liturgical teachings. Finally, in a third book, *Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution* (1965), Dr. Hill attributed to Francis Bacon, Walter Raleigh, and Edward Coke ideas of a largely secular character which contributed to the origins of the revolution though he admitted that he had been unable to discover either a Rousseau or a Marx. In his *Archbishop Laud* (2nd. edn., 1962) Professor Trevor-Roper attributed to his subject "an intellectual appeal

<sup>2</sup> *The Puritan Revolution. A Documentary History*. Edited by STUART E. PRALL. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £1 8s.

which found no favour," and in more recent scattered writings the same author has argued that Oliver Cromwell was the instrument of class destruction rather than the advocate of Puritan reform.

ONE SUSPECTS THAT the time has now come for a reaction against this sociological approach to history (it found its *reductio ad absurdum* in Peter Laslett's *The World We Have Lost* which deals with subjects like the illegitimacy rate in Shropshire villages). Mr. A. A. Hillary of Abingdon school in a sensible book on *Oliver Cromwell and the Challenge to the Monarchy*<sup>3</sup> writes in a forthright way:

One cannot really any longer accept Professor Tawney's view that the rebellion was the result of business pressure by a progressive capitalist gentry determined to increase its political power to match its new-found wealth. Nor does Professor Trevor-Roper's picture of a desperate and impoverished gentry striking out blindly against centralised government and court exploitation entirely fill the bill.

He argues instead that the revolt was engineered by a combination of a powerful section of the ruling classes in which many merchants, yeomen, and lesser people joined. (Mr. Hillary is an admirer of Oliver Cromwell's integrity. It is a pity he gets the date of Cromwell's birth wrong and does not explain why he has invented a new spelling for Cromwell's mother's maiden name.)

Mr. Stuart E. Prall in the introduction to his selection of well-chosen documents deals even more firmly with the new approach. While he says that he accepts the view that England in the mid-17th century experienced a "true revolution" he equally is reluctant to acknowledge the Tawney/Trevor-Roper preoccupation with the status of the gentry or the Christopher Hill touch which transmogrifies Puritanism into science and economics. The interesting thing is not why Parliament revolted against the absolutism of Charles I but why Charles I in 1641 was able to find a sufficiently large following in the gentry-filled House of Commons (as he did at the time of the debate on the Grand Remonstrance) to provoke a civil war. The truth is that no one has really refuted the conclusions of Brunton and Pennington's book on *Members of the Long Parliament* (1954) which shows there was virtually no difference between the composition of the two sides in the Commons, except that perhaps younger men favoured the royalist cause.

<sup>3</sup> *Oliver Cromwell and the Challenge to the Monarchy*. By A. A. HILLARY. Pergamon Press, 25s, paper 16s.



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NOT ONLY HAVE sociologists extended their researches to 17th-century England but linguistic philosophers are embracing it in their fields of inquiry. Professor Gunn of Ontario has just published a highly abstruse work<sup>4</sup> in which he ploughs through the lush pastures of 17th-century political writing to discover the meaning of the phrase "public interest" or the common good and how that is to be reconciled with the private interests of the individual. As Professor Gunn admits, "interest was a conveniently vague term," and when historians write of interests they more frequently mean the interests of groups such as economic classes or religious parties. Mr. Gunn is not much concerned with these, although in his chapter on "Economic Argument: the Public Interest Quantified," he becomes much more realistic. He takes, for instance, the questions of enclosure and usury and discusses whether they were of public advantage or could be made to fit in with the private interest of individuals. Thomas Mun's famous dictum about distinguishing "between the gain of the kingdom and the profit of the merchant" is quoted and it is shown how Mun was disconcerted in having to admit that a merchant might make an unjust gain at the expense of the public.

Broadly, one gathers, there are two solutions to the problems of the relationship of public and private interests. Either it may be said that in an ideal state the public interest is the sum of private interests or it may be argued that the public interest comprises the defence of the country against foreign enemies and the defence of private property against those who trouble the public order, and these two considerations must invariably override individual interests. The first doctrine, though often preached by individualists, seems a nonsense. The second is realistic but opens the way to constant conflicts with the individual as over those who are conscientious objectors or communists who do not believe in private property. As Professor Gunn says, the public interest or the common good often has a pompous sound: he instances a notice put up in British railway dining cars to the effect that it is not in the public interest to bring dogs into the carriage. Most of the writers in the 17th century do not appear to have been taken in by claims made for the Leviathan state. But there were exceptions, including of course Hobbes himself who made it

plain that "interest" inevitably moved all men in all they do and that conflicting private interests could not be reconciled without an overriding public interest. James Harrington met the point of conflict by accepting the fact that it was necessary to balance private interests against each other. But most writers were so absorbed in their own particular interests that they failed to see that conflicts could arise and that this was the reason of state that justified the power of governments.

WITH DR. VINCENT's excellent book on the grammar schools from 1660-1714<sup>5</sup> we return to the main highway of traditional history. In a book published in 1950, which has now become a standard authority, Dr. Vincent threw a flood of light on to the state of English education between 1640 and 1660. His new book has a wider scope. We are reminded how the hundred years before 1660 constituted a golden age for English education when many charitable bequests enabled new schools to be established. It is suggested that four thousand schools were in existence at this time. But after 1660 there was a decline in the quality and importance of the schools. Why was this? The reason was partly political. The grammar schools had produced the rebels, men like Oliver Cromwell, John Milton, John Hampden and John Selden. Although some headmasters were changed after Charles II's restoration, the grammar schools came under suspicion as the seedbeds of revolution and it appears that the gentry and merchant classes ceased to be so lavish in their support as they had been in the past. Whatever the exact cause, schools became poverty-stricken and their decline stretched into the 18th century. One of the defects of the free grammar schools was that their curriculum was so narrow, covering mainly Latin and sometimes Greek and Hebrew but not extending to modern subjects. Many of the masters were clergymen. But they were poorly paid, the average salary for a headmaster being £30 a year and for an usher £15. This scarcely bears comparison with the wages of skilled workmen such as builders. Though the children went to these schools at the ages of seven or eight, the preparatory or "petty" schools had not necessarily by that time inculcated the three Rs and thus there was a sad gap in the system of teaching.

Dr. Vincent tells us something about the dissenting schools and academies which were set up after the Restoration, but to attain a complete picture of education at this time one needs to know more about them. It is possible that their achievement to some extent compensated for the accepted decline in the grammar schools

<sup>4</sup> *Politics and the Public Interest in the Seventeenth Century*. By J. A. W. GUNN. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £3.

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and private schools and may modify the verdict of Professor Lawrence Stone that "there was a prolonged educational depression which began in the second half of the 17th century and lasted for over a hundred years." But we have reason to be grateful for the task now completed by Dr. Vincent, a solid piece of historical research and writing that is revealing in many different ways of how life was lived in England three hundred years ago.

THERE WERE two revolutions in the 17th century but few historians have tried to trace the precise connection between them. On the whole, the modern view seems to be to say that while the upheaval in the middle of the century was a social one and formed part of a general crisis which hit the whole of Europe, the revolution of 1688 consisted of the mere substitution of one king for another and scarcely deserves the title of a revolution at all. When the reviewer was at Oxford forty years ago the subject set for the Stanhope essay prize was "the republican movement in the reign of Charles II." One is inclined today to think that this movement was more important than used to be imagined. In a book entitled *John*

*Wildman: Plotter and Postmaster* (1947) I tried to trace how this mysterious and saturnine figure, who had been John Lilburne's first lieutenant in the hey-day of the Leveller movement, had been mixed up in nearly all the republican plots stretching from those that took place during the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell to those that were adumbrated in the first days of William III's reign. It is hardly doubtful that the Whig leader, the Earl of Shaftesbury—had he lived longer and recognised the feebleness of his candidate for the throne, the Duke of Monmouth—would have become a republican, while William III himself was to be extremely nervous about the possibilities of a successful republican movement interfering with his own ascent to the British throne.

In her new book entitled *Two English Republican Tracts*<sup>6</sup> Professor Caroline Robbins shows how two British authors, Henry Neville and Walter Moyle, spanned "the century in which republicanism of the kind proposed by English Commonwealthmen ran its course." Walter Moyle wrote his books at the beginning of the 18th century and the essay on the *Constitution and Government of the Roman State* (not published until 1796) which Professor Robbins reproduces, affords a rather obscure light on the republican movement. It might have been more valuable if she had reprinted Algernon Sidney's *Discourses* which, like Neville's *Plato Redivivus* (which she does reproduce) was written at the time of the exclusionist movement, a movement which we now know (thanks to Peter Laslett's researches) also inspired the political writings of John Locke. Undoubtedly the late 1670s and early 1680s were a fecund period in the history of English republicanism which can no doubt be traced onwards through Moyle and Tom Paine to the reaction against Queen Victoria's forbidding widowhood. A republican movement in fact has never been far below the surface in modern England (it is still there today, as witness some of the comment on Prince Charles' recent investiture). But the republican thinkers of the 17th century, from James Harrington to John Wildman, were all high-flown intellectuals, and it seems probable that they would have been content with a written constitution providing for a limited monarchy such as some historians see in an inchoate form in the days of Thomas Cromwell and even the early years of Charles II.

Mr. John Carswell in his learned book *The Descent on England* is concerned with the revolution of 1688 but chiefly in relation to its

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<sup>6</sup> *Two English Republican Tracts*. Edited by CAROLINE ROBBINS. Cambridge, £3.

European background<sup>1</sup> and makes little of the republican rumblings. We are left with the impression on reading this book that William was determined from an early stage to overthrow his father-in-law, King James II, in order that England should be made to play a big part in the prolonged struggle against the overweening ambitions of Louis XIV of France. The author's concentration on the preparations for the invasion of England (involving, as they did, the raising of no fewer than three armies by William) seems to me to put the revolution a little out of focus. In tune with the modern trend Mr. Carswell writes that "the Revolution was a far-reaching event, even though it was not a social upheaval of the kind the word 'revolution' describes today." But the point was that William could scarcely have carried out his invasion without bloodshed if the mass of the English people had not mistrusted James II and had not been warmed by that strangely virulent anti-papal feeling that can be traced back to the time of the Tudors. My own view, as suggested in my book on *The Glorious Revolution of 1688* (1966), is that this revolution cannot be properly understood without harking back to the exclusionist movement of ten years earlier. Charles II was then prepared to constitute a regency and William III waited agog to see if he would be made the regent. Steady majorities in the House of Commons were then voting to prevent James as an avowed Roman Catholic from ever succeeding to the throne. After a Tory reaction James was given his chance to prove himself a moderate king, but he failed to grasp it. Thus the same sort of classes combined in a *national* movement to overthrow James II as had combined to overthrow his father.

Thus it may be argued that the revolutionary movement in 17th-century England was all of a piece, that it was, as far as such a phenomenon may be fairly described, a national movement against absolutism and against Roman Catholicism whose origins may be detected in the last years of Queen Elizabeth I's reign. The aristocracy may have passed through a "crisis" (as Professor Stone avers), and the gentry may have "risen" or "fallen" or both, but in any case there was an articulate body of society in England which was not prepared to stomach the kind of absolute government that prevailed in France, Sweden, and elsewhere in Europe. That is what, it seems to me, makes 17th-century England and her revolutions unique.

<sup>1</sup> *The Descent on England*. By JOHN CARSWELL. Barrie & Rockliff: The Cresset Press, 50s.

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— BASIL BLACKWELL —

## Accepting the Revolution

By D. W. Brogan

**T**HAT SWEET ENEMY, "France" is a quotation from one of the works of another product of Shrewsbury School, Sir Philip Sidney, which Mr. Richard Cobb exemplifies in this very remarkable series of essays on French historical topics.<sup>1</sup> His title is revealing, and revealing of a very important fact about Mr. Cobb. The "second identity" he has acquired is that of being almost a Frenchman; almost rising to the rank of a *métèque*. He rejoices in the accident which saved him from settling in as a German student when he went down from Oxford; and, with all the necessary reservations, irritations, and misunderstandings that are provoked by a refugee from the "Anglo-Saxon" world, he tries to study France not quite as a Frenchman but, what is perhaps more difficult, in French terms. He fully realises that France is not really under a continual examination for moral and intellectual probity by an English "jury," and he does not necessarily feel called on to give marks of good or bad behaviour in the manner of so many real or pseudo historians of France.

The fact that he escaped from the rather clammy embraces of Vienna is important. Perhaps he would not go as far as Bismarck who once described a Bavarian as "something between an Austrian and a human being"; but his dislike of *Gemütlichkeit* is a very healthy symptom. Indeed, now I come to reflect on it, a number of my friends who had to make a choice between settling for France or Germany in the period *entre deux guerres* had reason then and later to be grateful that they chose France, for it seems—I am possibly unjust—that the people who chose Germany or Austria got the worst of both worlds. They sank into a kind of political and historical *Schwärmerei*, and some have not yet cleansed their bosoms of the perilous stuff. It would be unkind to name names, but I *could* name quite a lot of people

who never recovered from their adventures, erotic and otherwise, in the days of the Weimar Republic.

It must be noted for a beginning that Mr. Cobb is not one of our neutral, drab, scientific historians. He has none of the English talent that Newman described (I am quoting from memory), that of steering between the Charybdis of yes and the Scylla of no. He is a man of the Left. His natural sympathies go out, not indeed to all of the Left, but to a great deal of it, as a kind of Pavlovian reflex. I have two sympathies in France, and they are mostly with the Left, but I think I am not as easily excited to indignation by the iniquities of the Right as Mr. Cobb was and, to some extent, still is. For without going as far as the late Gilbert Murray who said in his old age that he had decided the Left is even sillier than the Right (he was talking about England), I think there is a great deal to be said against both sides. Thus, I do not feel indignation in thinking of Monsieur de Charette *chassant les perdrix*, nor would I have objected to joining in singing *Vive Henri IV* if I had ever heard it sung anywhere in France, even in the most *bien-pensant* circles. (I have always thought that a book on French politics by a rather silly Englishwoman who translated *les bien-pensants* as "people who thought a lot" explains a great deal in the non-comprehension of the two close neighbours.)

Nearly all of Mr. Cobb's essays here are devoted either to specific points of historical research in the history of the Revolution or to discussions of the historiography of the Revolution. There is, perhaps, not enough about the historiography of the Revolution in the immediate post-Revolutionary years although there is a very just and consequently flattering essay on a remarkable study of the "Prefects of the Restoration," carried out in brilliant form by Dr. Nicholas Richardson.

BUT IT IS THE PASSION of the Revolution itself that Mr. Cobb deals with. He is not naïve about this. In a famous exchange between Clemen-

SIR DENIS BROGAN was, until recently, Professor of Political Science at Cambridge. He is the author of many works on American history, and his book on "The Development of Modern France" was recently re-issued by Hamish Hamilton.

<sup>1</sup> *A Second Identity: Essays on France and French History*. By RICHARD COBB. Oxford University Press, 55s.

ceau and a *rallié* who had said, "I accept the Republic," Clemenceau retorted, "But do you accept the Revolution?" Mr. Cobb decidedly accepts the Revolution. But this does not mean that he accepts the Revolutionary historians *en bloc* for he knows more than Clemenceau did and knows that the Revolution was not a *bloc* as Clemenceau once asserted. He was early shocked, and has remained shocked, at the passion of the French for blood and blood-letting, and for their readiness to excuse what may well seem inexcusable. It is not a case of being a professional moralist of a rather unpleasant type, as was the first Lord Acton. But Mr. Cobb does not accept the implication of the famous question put by Barnarve, "And was this blood so pure?" We have seen too much of the doctrine of the *sang impur* in quite recent years to be *barnarviste*. Mr. Cobb has recently joined Miss Betty Behrens in resisting the sophistries of that vicarious revolutionary, Professor Albert Soboul. On the other hand, it might be noted that in the days of May 1968, although there was a great deal of talk about blood, there was very little blood. By American standards, almost any week-end is a great deal bloodier than the five weeks of the abortive '68 revolution. But as Mr. Cobb points out, the French throw around words like *assassin* when they don't mean very much by it: it would be a useful addition to French if it had some equivalent of the Irish exact phrase, "He was killed dead."

Nor is Mr. Cobb a Marxist (neither, after all, or so he said, was Marx). But I don't think he is quite sceptical enough about the Marxism of a great many eminent French alleged Marxists. I have never been able to take the Marxism of that great man Jean Jaurès seriously: can one conceive a less Marxist book than his famous Latin thesis on the origins of German Socialism? Nor do I think his *Histoire Socialiste* is a very Marxist work. Nevertheless, Mr. Cobb gained a great deal by the years he spent in Communist company. Even if he got a dose, as they say, he recovered from it with only slight twinges in his ideological framework reminding him—and us—of the illusions of the 1930s.

FOR ONE THING, Mr. Cobb insists on the personality of history, or on the fact that history is very largely about personalities. It is not that he is a hero worshipper or a hero denigrator. There is no Carlylean nonsense here. (I hope I am right in suspecting that Mr. Cobb detests that odious Scot as much as I do.) Nevertheless, he dislikes, as I do, the French habit of being in the medieval sense of the term, "realists." So we have categories like *le peuple*; *la Gauche*; *la réaction* and, although it is now

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going out of date, *le suffrage universel*. Just as some Nazi leader or other said that whenever he heard the word culture used, he wanted to draw his revolver, I feel much the same when I hear Frenchmen say, "You cannot understand our Cartesian way of looking at things..." I don't know that many Frenchmen know very much about Descartes, and I once remember warning a French official who was going to carry out negotiations in London with a British official that his opposite number knew a great deal more about Descartes than he did. But it is often difficult to persuade Frenchmen that any foreigner knows anything better than they do. On the other hand, I think Mr. Cobb is absurdly pessimistic about the knowledge of foreign tongues among the French professor class.

It is perhaps because he has dealt mainly with French historians of France that he thinks the great Georges Lefebvre<sup>2</sup> was almost unique in his knowledge of English and German. This is quite untrue. But Georges Lefebvre was a formidable man and one of the things he insisted on might perhaps be a little more in Mr. Cobb's mind. Lefebvre had the habit of saying, "You must know how to count," and you must! Mr. Cobb is too open to *passer outre* when faced with questions in which some counting is an aid to solution—or a guarantee against a kind of error. For example, looking back on the '30s of the *Front Populaire*, Mr. Cobb comments on how youthful France felt at that time. I have a basic objection to this statement. While Mr. Cobb was in Paris or in various archival depositories, I was living in a village of which I am a citizen. It was a village visibly dying under my eyes. I don't see how a country can be called youthful if in fact its population is ageing, and ageing very alarmingly, and one of the oddest aspects of recent English discussions of France has been a failure to notice that we are seeing for the first time for over a century, the emergence of a France that is really young because quite soon a majority of the French population will be young people.

A minor point: when Mr. Cobb talks of the *fileuses* of the First Republic, I just wonder how many there were? For at this time there was not a single steam-driven piece of cotton machinery in France. The first appears in Alsace in 1812, and in fact cotton was a minor industry even in England, as it had to be before Mr. Eli Whitney, one of Mr. Cobb's detested Yankees, had invented the cotton gin in 1795.

<sup>2</sup> His study of Napoleon has recently been published in English translation by Routledge & Kegan Paul: Vol. I, *From 18 Brumaire to Tilsit, 1799–1807*, 35s. Vol. II, *From Tilsit to Waterloo, 1807–1815*, 45s.

THERE IS NO DOUBT that Mr. Cobb thinks that, with all the necessary qualifications imposed on our sad human condition, the French Revolution was, to quote from 1066, "a good thing." He obviously thinks that thinking too much about the Revolution or applying optimistically the alleged lessons of the great Revolution to the situation in France today could have its dangers. Indeed it could. For one can either take the view, as so many Frenchmen do, following Taine, that France took a wrong turning in 1789 and is still going down the wrong street; or that the Revolution was over with the establishment of the Third, Fourth, or Fifth Republic; or that the Revolution is still going on. The mere survival of words like *convention* in the recent desperate efforts of the French Left to become something other than a vague body of competing ambitions and confused traditions is itself one of the prices of Revolution—and I have myself written a book trying to show that revolutions have a very high price.

But it is one of the very many great merits of Cobb's book that it makes us see what France is like, and that the achievements of France, great as they are, have taken this post-revolutionary form and it is too late to lament about it. Then questions of revolutionary history in France are part of politics as they are in other countries like the United States. Nobody in England, outside the academic world, gives a damn for the questions that arise from the rise and fall of the gentry. Outside Ireland, religious history in the true sense, *i.e.* an affair of envy, malice, and all uncharitableness, is less and less in demand. But in France these issues were, until recently, still part of French politics and, in a sense, of French life. Mr. Cobb brings this home to our bosoms by his brilliant and amazing amount of work in provincial archives, by his account of the oddities of archivists (which recall to me some of the oddities of Senators and Congressmen) and his understanding of the preference of the product of the *École des Chartes* for pre-Revolution subjects.

There is one reason for this preference which Mr. Cobb does not discuss, though I think it is impossible to believe he does not know of it. An archivist has in his hands an immense amount of family material which may not only show up great scandals in the past but may also show great pretensions about the past. I know one archivist who, in addition to passing first out of the *École des Chartes*, is a doctor of medicine and a country gentleman, and he was quite startled to receive a *faire part* for a wedding from a nobleman of whom he had never heard. Making discreet enquiries, he discovered it was one of the clerks in his own office who had ennobled himself. It is one of the

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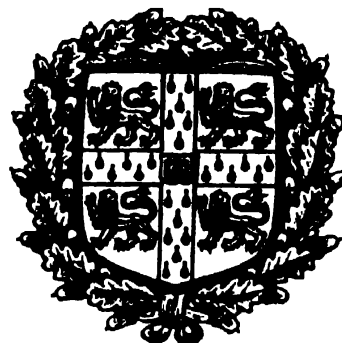
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Finally, Cambridge have recently reissued in cloth (30s. net) and put into paperback (12s. net) Herbert Butterfield's *Man on His Past: The Study of the History of Historical Scholarship*. On its original publication in 1955, *The Listener* commented, 'The way Professor Butterfield blows the gaff on the technical historian's pretensions will delight the wider public and disconcert (one hopes) the historical pundit.'

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pleasures of this *érudit* to report on the alleged noble pretensions of various eminently bourgeois and indeed, in origin, Jacobin families. (I regret to say that I cannot share Mr. Cobb's admiration for that monster of vanity Joseph Callilaux whose most characteristic speech was one addressed to a group of, as he no doubt thought, admiring workers, pointing out that he was doing them a good turn by speaking to them—"moi qui suis presque noble." And if Mr. Cobb were dealing with very modern France, he might note the revival in political influence of some genuinely noble families like *Les Broglie* as well as the arrival of some very new noble families including some interesting members of HSP (*Haute Société Protestante*).

It is, perhaps, a sign of certain remaining "Anglo-Saxon" prejudices that Mr. Cobb seems to me to have an unlimited and, I think, excessive admiration for the French Protestants, but he does not distinguish nearly enough between the members of the "Pretended Reformed Church," to translate baldly, and the Alsatian Lutherans. I prefer the Alsatian Lutherans, including Monsieur Pierre-Paul Schweitzer, the tyrant of the International Monetary Fund, who has also the distinction of being a first cousin of Monsieur Jean-Paul Sartre. Thus, Mr. Cobb rashly asserts that there were no Vichyssois among the French Protestants. He must know French Protestants who are very unlike those I know, because, being on the whole prosperous, stable, and possibly alarmed people, a great many of them were more devoted to the Marshal, practically and emotionally, than many Catholics; and when we are told, as by Mr. Cobb, of the edifying virtues shown by some Protestant *pasteurs* protesting against the abominations of French rule in Algeria, he might have mentioned a much more important and relevantly courageous critic, the Archbishop of Algiers. He might even have mentioned the pioneering work carried out, not by *Le Monde* but by *La Croix*, in exposing the atrocities of French repression. And Mr. Cobb could ponder the careers of Monsieur Gaston Doumergue, General Nivelle, and Monsieur Guy Mollet. (It was to some extent Nivelle's partly English origin, the fact that he was bilingual, and a Protestant that commended him in 1916 to Lloyd George, with disastrous results for everybody.)

IT IS, I THINK, a good sign that Mr. Cobb's book has excited me a great deal, almost always to approval, sometimes to feeling, "How can somebody who knows so much not know that?" or alternatively, "How can somebody who knows so much believe that?" I am ready

to believe that Mr. Cobb could reverse the charges against me. But there is, all through this book, visible Mr. Cobb's prodigious erudition—exemplified in the fact that his greatest work in bulk and merit, *Les Armées Révolutionnaires* (2 vols., 1961-63), was written in French and published at The Hague. This indeed is a long way from the rather innocent or ignorant or malicious English commentators on what Tennyson called "the red-fool fury of the Seine." Since our relations with France are likely to be extremely important even in the absence, permanent or temporary, of the General, a book like this which is almost French but gains a great deal from not being quite French is of the greatest scholarly but also of very great practical interest. For alas for so many people the English reporting of the events of last year showed "the further off from England the nearer is to France."

There is one very representative aspect of Mr. Cobb's reporting on the French intellectual climate as he has known it so well, in Paris as well as in provincial archives. He is a stout anti-American. There is no evidence that he knows anything about America, but this in France is no handicap for writing articles or even books on America. Did not Madame de Beauvoir get the *prix Goncourt* for writing a *roman à clef* called *Les Mandarins*, of which the hero (who restored the heroine's belief in sex) was called Brogan? I was told later that Madame de Beauvoir believed that Brogan was a Finnish name. To give one example of Mr. Cobb's inadequate preparation for being a competent anti-American, he misses the point when he discusses his indignation and that of Sartre and others about the execution of the Rosenbergs. I was—indeed, am—even more indignant about this than Messieurs Sartre and Cobb. But the reason for my indignation was that I knew how harmless and trivial was their very petty treason, and how malignant their persecution by the Eisenhower administration. After all, Mr. Cobb does not seem to have reflected at all on the fact that his belief and the belief of Sartre and others that America was planning a pre-emptive war against the Soviet Union has turned out to be a standard French *canard*.

It could, of course, be held that it was fear of alienating Jean-Paul Sartre even further that tied the hands of the Pentagon. But Mr. Cobb does not have *two* second identities as, at a much lower level, I have. And then when he rebukes Professor Robert Palmer of Princeton University for trying to have a systematic theory of the Revolution, he refuses to consider the possibility that there are aspects of the Revolution that the Americans can understand better than even the most enlightened Englishman.

(Not, probably, better than Scotchmen or Irishmen.) Thus it was Dean Palmer who has recently pointed out to us that Thomas Jefferson, Minister to the Most Christian King, when called in as a *docteur ès révolutions* was in fact far too conservative for even very mild members of the body which was creating itself as a National Assembly. There is a good deal of Jefferson which might be read as if it came from Burke. And perhaps a discussion of why Jefferson thought thus in 1789 and later rejoiced in the fall of Bonaparte and even in the restoration of Louis XVIII *might* be a profitable exercise. Perhaps Jefferson was right—and Georges Lefebvre, that patriotic Jacobin historian, was wrong in not rejoicing at the fall of Napoleon or in admiring the role of an *émigré*

<sup>3</sup> *English Historians on the French Revolution*. By HEDVA BEN-ISRAEL. Cambridge University Press, 63s.

<sup>4</sup> *Interpretations of the French Revolution*. By G. RUDÉ. *Historians and the Causes of the French Revolution*. By ALFRED COBBAN. Routledge and Kegan Paul for the Historical Association (2s. 6d.)

like General Moreau. Yet as a brilliant young Cambridge historian has recently said, "It is right to lament the issue of the Battle of Leipzig, but it is wrong to lament the issue of the Battle of Waterloo...."

However, although I do not accept everything that Mr. Cobb asserts, apart from his own very precise scholarship, I can hardly be critical of a book which shares my view of that most despicably bad modern French statesman, Adolphe Thiers. How vastly superior to him was Pierre Laval!

Since Mr. Cobb put together these essays, Miss Hedva Ben-Israel's study<sup>3</sup> has been published and has been reviewed without much kindness in the *Times Literary Supplement*. Problems of the importance of the historiography of the French Revolution are still not merely academic, and perhaps at another time, with the consent of the Editor of *ENCOUNTER*, I may return to them. But at the moment all I can do is recommend in different ways Miss Ben-Israel's book and the two pamphlets<sup>4</sup> which are listed here.

## Learning from the Russians

By Leonard Schapiro

THERE HAS OF LATE been a minor revival of interest in a neglected aspect of Russian history—Russian political thought of the 19th century. A number of books have appeared, in England and in the United States, dealing with Russian writers on politics, and several significant works have been translated. The most important of the books to appear is Professor Robert F. Byrnes' long-awaited and definitive study of Constantine Pobedonostsev, the result of many years' research and of meticulous exploitation of his extensive *Nachlass*.<sup>1</sup> Pobedonostsev's *Reflections of a Russian Statesman* were sponsored in translation for the English reader by the indefatigable Olga Novikoff in 1898. The author's aim was to expose the "great falsehood

of our time," the notion of popular sovereignty—adding (for the English reader) his voice to those of Maine and Carlyle. His influence in England was probably negligible; in Russia it was enormous. A senator and a member of the State Council for many years, he was tutor to the last two Emperors, and, for twenty five years, as Director General of the Most Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church, a member of the Council of Ministers. Unoriginal, unimaginative, limited and not very honest intellectually, he exercised an influence on Alexander III and Nicholas II which was often decisive at critical moments, and disastrous. The Tsars and Pobedonostsev shared the same prejudices, acted from the same instincts, and spoke the same language: more accurately, perhaps, he articulated for them their own intuitive ideas. He was thus often able to restrain them at times when there was some chance that they could have been persuaded to make relatively minor political concessions which might have prevented the ultimate total alienation of the moderate and

LEONARD SCHAPIRO's recent works include "Rationalism and Nationalism in Russian 19th-Century Political Thought" (1967, Yale University Press), "A History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union" (1960, Eyre & Spottiswoode), and "The Origin of the Communist Autocracy" (1955, George Bell). He is Professor of Political Science with special reference to Russian Studies at the London School of Economics.

<sup>1</sup> *Pobedonostsev: His Life and Thought*. By ROBERT F. BYRNES. Indiana University Press, 1968, \$15; American University Publishers Group, 143s.

loyal elements in Russian society from the autocracy. The consequences were the unfortunate constitutional reforms of 1906 (too much *and* too late) and the revolution of 1917.

Pobedonostsev is usually described as a conservative. It is an inaccurate description, since conservatism does not mean merely the determination to resist all change and the refusal to adapt to the realities of a changing society, which usually characterised Pobedonostsev. Conservatism in politics is the philosophy of change and adaptation without sacrificing the tradition and achievements of the past. Occasionally, Pobedonostsev had his moments of vision. Thus, a profound supporter of unlimited autocracy, he foresaw the need to reform the land-holding system on the lines of the Stolypin reforms 17 years before they were in the event inaugurated. But in general he was opposed to social mobility; he was intolerant, anti-Semitic and anti-feminist. However, many of the evils which he deplored were real enough. It is not for us, living in the aftermath of mass democracy, amidst the near-ruin of moral standards, leadership, order and cultural values, to scoff at this simple indignation. But indignation without remedy is of little use, and Pobedonostsev had no remedy beyond obstinate resistance to reform at a time when his country badly needed reform.

THERE WERE SOME OTHER Russian thinkers in the course of the nineteenth century who tackled the problem of reforming the political system without either sacrificing the traditional character of the country or yet deciding that the first necessary step towards reform was to blow the whole place up. Yet, to read some of our historians, one might imagine that there was no choice for a Russian intellectual in the 19th century between Pobedonostsev and the revolutionaries. Names like Granovsky, Chicherin, Redkin, Kavclin, Kovalevsky, Koni or Shipov hardly figure in most of the accounts of 19th-century Russian thought in English—to say nothing of Soviet accounts. We are most usually offered a version of political thought in Russia before 1917 where Revolution as a desirable end is taken for granted, and all thinkers are, consciously or unconsciously, judged in terms of their contribution to this laudable objective. And yet, the problem of achieving progress and reform, while at the same time avoiding the cataclysm of the kind of violent revolution advocated by the Decembrist Pestel, by Chernyshevsky, Bakunin, Tkachev and Lenin, was one of the two main preoccupations of several generations of Russian minds—from Pushkin to Miliukov—in the century before the revolution. The other all-absorbing theme was the question

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of Russia's place in Europe: ought Russia to go the same way as the countries of Western Europe, borrow institutions from them, in fact, as she had borrowed ideas? Or was Russia destined to follow a quite different, and greatly superior, historical path of her own—as, say, Pobedonostsev and Herzen, in their different ways, believed?

The chasm between evolution and revolution opened early in the century. It was already evident among the Decembrists. But in its most graphic form it is to be found in the account by P. V. Annenkov of the famous "Remarkable Decade," of 1839 to 1849, which has now happily at long last been made available in a readable (if not always accurate) translation.<sup>2</sup> It is an account of the intellectual development and tribulations of a circle of outstanding men which included (besides Annenkov himself) Belinsky, Herzen, Granovsky, Kireevsky, Bakunin, Botkin, and Kavelin. Annenkov describes, at the dawn of what was later to become the revolutionary movement, the gulf which formed between those who emotionally embraced violent revolution as the ultimate necessary and even desirable solution, and those who were appalled by the horrors which they instinctively apprehended from the coming revolution, and by their conviction that a revolution would not necessarily solve all the problems. The gulf was symbolised by the estrangement which took place in 1846 between Granovsky on the one hand, and Herzen and Belinsky on the other. Granovsky, one of the most penetrating Russian thinkers of the 19th century (almost completely neglected by modern historians) viewed socialism as it was developing in France with apprehension. He regarded it as

the malady of the age, all the more dangerous . . . in that it teaches one to look for solutions to the problems of social life not in the arena of politics, which it despises, but apart from that arena, whereby it undermines both it and itself.

Herzen and Belinsky, in contrast, while regarding many of the egalitarian pronouncements of socialists as "puerile," nevertheless viewed the impending disintegration of European civilisation under the impact of socialism "without calling for, but also without terror of, the havoc" it was bound (not "supposed," as Mr. Titunik will have it) to produce. They believed that from the ashes of the old civilisation of Europe would arise a phoenix—a new order of things to be the crowning achievement and the last word of its thousand-year-long development.

<sup>2</sup> *The Extraordinary Decade. Literary Memoirs of P. V. Annenkov.* Edited by Arthur P. Mendel. Translated by Irwin R. Titunik. University of Michigan Press, 1968, \$8.50; T.A.B.S., £4.

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HERZEN in his memoirs has also left an account of the estrangement between him and Granovsky, along with a warm, moving and generous tribute to the man whom he venerated, in spite of all differences of outlook. (Readers of Dostoevsky's *Possessed*, in which the character of Sergei Trofimovich Verkhovensky was intended by the author to portray Granovsky, should be warned that this was as grotesque a misrepresentation of the man as Karmazinov, in the same novel, was of Turgenev.) It was characteristic of Herzen that he should have devoted his entire account of the rift between him and Granovsky in 1846 (in Chapter 32 of his *Memoirs*) to the other cause which underlay it—Herzen's militant atheism and materialism which Granovsky could accept neither philosophically nor emotionally.

It is unlikely that in later years when he wrote his account Herzen ever realised the significance of the gulf which divided those Russians who rejected revolution from those, like himself, who were half in love with it. Herzen was a typical man of the "Left"—a kind of Slav Kingsley Martin with genius added. He was generous in mind, with a wide intellectual range and a fine historical sense. When it came to political issues his judgments came from the heart and not from the head. He had quite predictable built-in reactions to certain matters like religion, monarchy, and the established order. But he also supported lost causes with no thought for himself—like the cause of Poland in 1863—and thereby alienated the mostly chauvinistic radicals inside Russia. He did more than any Russian to stimulate passionate hatred of tyranny and oppression inside his country: but he gave little guidance either on what freedom means, or on what the preservation of it entails. Whatever views one may hold of Herzen as a political thinker, it would be hard to deny either the irresistibly attractive qualities of the man or the literary genius which found its best expression in his very long memoirs, *My Past and Thoughts*, composed in fits and starts, and in different sections, in the fifteen years between 1852 and 1867. The new edition of the English translation which has recently appeared is not only much fuller than Mrs. Constance Garnett's (published in 1924–1927), but has also been considerably revised by Humphrey Higgins.<sup>3</sup> The

result is an accurate and readable version which at times even succeeds in capturing the magic of the original Russian.

Herzen's politics of the heart are nowhere more evident than in his conflict with Boris Nikolaevich Chicherin, the lawyer, historian and philosopher. Chicherin's respect for legal order, so alien to most Russians, his search for stability in institutions and not in slogans, his realism about the dangers of revolutionary enthusiasm before conditions were ripe for change, earned him the hatred of his contemporaries on "the left." His tireless advocacy of civil liberty and of modifications of the autocratic system through the introduction of representative institutions antagonised court circles and Pobedonostsev (with whom after many years of friendship he quarrelled in 1882). Herzen and Chicherin clashed over articles which Herzen published in the *Bell* in 1858, at a time when all hopes were set on the emancipation of the serfs and on other reforms which it was believed must follow it, calling for a revolution by the peasants, and for emancipation "from below." One can understand and sympathise with the Russian liberals and radicals who in the years after the initial reforms of Alexander II of 1861–64 were progressively driven to more extreme positions by the intransigence of the autocracy in not letting those reforms follow their logical conclusion towards representative government. But in 1858? When Chicherin called on Herzen, Herzen was immediately repelled.

There was a cold light in his eyes, [he recalls in the *Memoirs*] and there was a challenge and a terrifying repellent self-assurance in the tone of his voice. From his first words I felt that this was not an opponent, but an enemy.

What utter nonsense this seems—until one recalls that Russia is the country above all others where "left" and "right" have always been ready to unite in hatred of the frail and vulnerable centre. Witness Turgenev's fate in Russian intellectual history. The passage from "left" to "right" has always been easy—as shown by the careers of Tikhomirov, Azef, Malinovsky, and of many hundreds more. Those who have stayed steadfast at the point of balance have been few indeed, and always the objects of hatred and contempt. Even Dr. Walicki,<sup>4</sup> who, after all, is a Pole and not a Russian, is being very unfair when he dismisses Chicherin as no more than a straight Hegelian who believed in History and in a strong state. But much can be forgiven Dr. Walicki whose recent volume on the Russian Populists is, like all his work, full of most valuable insights and penetrating analysis.

The most interesting aspect of the development of the Populists (of whom Herzen and his

<sup>3</sup> *My Past and Thoughts. The Memoirs of Alexander Herzen.* Translated by Constance Garnett. Revised by Humphrey Higgins. With an Introduction by Isaiah Berlin. Four Volumes. London; Chatto & Windus, £10 10s. New York; Alfred A. Knopf, \$30.

<sup>4</sup> A. Walicki. *The Controversy over Capitalism: Studies in the Social Philosophy of the Russian Populists.* Clarendon Press, Oxford, 45s.

friend Ogarev were the original inspirers) was that their turn towards conspiracy, organisational discipline, assassination and violence came almost involuntarily. It was not that they rejected either violence or assassination. But they believed (or many of them did) along with Bakunin that the violence must come from the people, just as the revolution must come from the people: the populist revolutionary must only stimulate and guide the natural instincts of the people. Opinions differed on the nature of these natural instincts—glorious destruction, rapine, and arson, according to Bakunin; wise, socialist self-government, according to Herzen.

The heart-searching which led to the acceptance of a programme of violent deeds in 1879 was not due to any fear of bloodshed. What repelled many Populists was the transition which this signified in their eyes to "political" action, as distinct from serving the spontaneous, social process by stimulating peasant revolts or by trying to educate peasant leaders—as they had done hitherto. In any event, the murder of Alexander II on 1 March 1881, without any preparation either for widespread revolt or for seizure of power, was a completely futile "political" act. Nevertheless, the Populists acquired some of the elements of politics in the course of their transition to this novel and alien policy. They even

began occasionally to think in terms of constitutional development and civil rights—something which had hitherto been totally foreign to the whole movement. When in September 1881 President Garfield died as the result of a wound inflicted by an assassin some months before, the remnants of the Executive Committee of the *People's Will* issued a Declaration of sympathy to the American people, and of protest against the assassination, adding the following words:

In a country where personal freedom provides the opportunity for the honest battle of ideas, where the free will of the people determines not only the law but the persons of the rulers—in such a country to use political assassination as a means of struggle is to display the same spirit of despotism as the one which we have set ourselves the task of destroying in Russia.

(On a lower level, the recent reaction of Czech students to the antics of revolutionary students in America, France or Britain was very similar in its censoriousness.)

Dr. Walicki is concerned entirely with the philosophy of populism, not with the politics of the Populists. His interpretation is perhaps at times open to debate. But he deals perceptively and learnedly with the side of populism which illustrates the second peculiarity that distinguishes modern Russian political thought: the

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desire to avoid capitalist development on Western lines, and the belief that Russia could follow a different and superior path to socialism from that which was open to Western Europe. (Peter Struve was probably right in pointing out that this was in essence a continuation of the debate initiated by the Slavophiles against the "Westerners" in the 1840s.) But all this line of thought was overtaken by events—or so it was believed at the time. By the end of the century the peasant commune was in decay, the industrial "take-off" was now well under way, something like what German Socialists called a proletariat was discernible in Russia. It was the turn for Marxism, with its optimistic message of the inexorable social revolution. Marxism, moreover, satisfied Westerners (like Struve) both because it was believed to be the last word in economic science and because it held out the promise that along with capitalism would come such benefits as law, order, and civilised government, which in turn would lay the foundations for the future social revolution. The only trouble was (and very few discerned it at the time) that all this was totally irrelevant to Russia which still retained all the vestiges of an Asiatic despotism. One of the few who did at times realise this was the most learned Marxist of them all—Plekhanov. But it was only towards the end of his life, shocked and horrified by the Bolshevik seizure of power, a sick and disappointed man, that he at last posed the awful question to Lev Deich: Were we perhaps wrong to launch social democracy in Russia, at a time when the country was not socially ripe for it?...

BUT NO ONE POSED THIS QUESTION in the years when social democracy was on the march, in the first decade of the century. The debate lumbered on between the "orthodox" Marxists and the innovator Lenin. It has taken many years before it has become evident that the former were largely irrelevant, and that the latter bore very little relation to Marxism. Among recent publications is a very welcome translation of two

<sup>5</sup> Vladimir Akimov on the Dilemmas of Russian Marxism 1895-1903. "The Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party" and "A Short History of the Social Democratic Movement in Russia." Two Texts in Translation, Edited and Introduced by Jonathan Frankel. Cambridge University Press, £3.

<sup>6</sup> His memoirs are also now available in translation: *Political Memorials 1905-1917* by Paul Miliukov. Edited by Arthur P. Mendel. Translated by Carl Goldberg. University of Michigan Press, 1967. \$9.75; T.A.B.S., £4 12s.

<sup>7</sup> Though happily not in this journal. See, for example, Melvin J. Lasky's "The Prometheans: On the Imagery of Fire & Revolution," ENCOUNTER, October 1968.

pamphlets by one of the most moderate and intelligent of the "orthodox" Marxists, Akimov—one on the Second Congress of the Social Democrats, the other the earliest history of the Russian Social Democratic movement.<sup>5</sup> Akimov was a gradualist by temperament who, like many followers of Marx, believed that the revolution of the future must come about almost of its own accord as the result of the development by the working class of its social consciousness, evolved in the course of its democratic struggle for its rights. This view was, of course, diametrically opposed to Lenin's doctrine, as expounded in *What is to be Done* (and earlier), that a democratic struggle could never lead to revolution, but only to "mere trade-unionism." Akimov was, incidentally, one of the two who alone, of all the delegates, joined issue with Lenin on the main thesis of *What is to be Done* at the Second Congress. (The other, Martynov, eventually ended up by becoming a Bolshevik.)

It is, of course, conceivable that Akimov (and many who were after 1904 to become Mensheviks) could have been right: if the autocracy had allowed constitutional order to develop gradually (as Chicherin had urged), if it had learnt to tame its wild socialists by absorption into political life instead of leaving them alienated and enraged on the fringes of illegality, if liberals (like Miliukov<sup>6</sup>) had had less passion and more sense, if . . . , if . . . .

The most important truth about revolutionaries, so much neglected in revolutionary history,<sup>7</sup> is that they are motivated by temperament and emotion much more than by reason or doctrine. Impatience, frustration, envy, megalomania, resentment, alienation—these are the important facts in the kaleidoscope of eccentricities that so much of Russian revolutionary history reveals. The great division between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks itself, which is foreshadowed in Akimov's pamphlets, was a matter of temperament rather than doctrine: there are many periods when differences in doctrine between the two factions are scarcely discernible. But, in temperament, they drifted ever farther apart. On the Bolshevik side were grouped the adventurers, the impatient, the romantics, the men who saw in an assertion of "hardness," or of indifference to accepted moral standards, a kind of self-justification or compensation for a generation of Russian intellectuals humiliated by their own ineffectiveness. Lenin, with his familiar clichés about the virtues of the revolutionary—so different from the "kid gloves" and the "young ladies' finishing school" and all that—actively encouraged this temperamental affinity among his supporters and would-be supporters. Above all, Bolshevism appealed because it offered the prospect of immediate action: the

more "orthodox" Marxism of Menshevism at best offered hope for the distant future. And indeed, as time wore on, the Bolsheviks with their bank robberies and their internecine warfare in the Duma, became in many ways the party of the activists: the Mensheviks, who talked of strikes and demonstrations, became (without abandoning their theoretical faith in ultimate revolution) the party of the gradualists.

IT WAS ABOVE ALL among the real eccentrics that temperament, or self-gratification, revealed itself as so much more important than doctrine. There was Nechaev, for example, who played at revolution as Glasgow gangs play at war—with a fake organisation, with every conceivable form of deceit, mystification, blackmail, defamation and intimidation—and with little more effective result than to bring discredit on the revolutionary movement, and to produce a reaction against revolutionary activity among the Populists. Yet, to Nechaev goes the credit of stumbling on a new revolutionary principle (familiar in practice, if not in theory, to every rioting student today)—the binding force of mutual complicity in an act of violence. It was to test his theory that Nechaev organised the murder of one member of his miniscule revolutionary group jointly by all the others, on the trumped-up allegation that the victim, Ivanov, was planning a betrayal. (Many years were to pass before this theory of the cohesiveness of joint acts of violence was to be developed by Jean-Paul Sartre and Frantz Fanon *expressis verbis*, and by the exponents of guerrilla warfare by implication.) One would be tempted to dismiss all this as a mere aberration in the serious stream of revolution—as indeed Nechaev's contemporaries tended to do. And yet, Nechaev stood close to Tkachev and (until the break between them) to Bakunin; and these in turn left their imprint on none other than Lenin. The web of revolutionary thought—or temperament—is too closely woven for us to be able to say that this or that thread can be ignored.

THE RECOGNITION BY HISTORIANS that Lenin must be regarded as more closely related to Russian tradition than to Marxism has made it possible to assess his true place within Russian 19th-century political thought. He was on the revolutionary side of the line which had divided Granovsky from Herzen; but much more than Herzen, he was unswerv-

ingly committed to revolution, to revolution for its own sake almost. In this respect he derived more from Bakunin than from Herzen, or from any of the Populists. He drew inspiration (as he tells us himself) from the organisational methods of the *People's Will*. But, unlike them, he laid his plans for the seizure of power with care, and did not just hope for the best from a futile, dramatic act. He learned, probably from Tkachev, that the first thing to do was to seize state power, not to destroy it; popular support could come later. To a much greater extent than Tkachev he studied the "revolutionary situation," the dangerous point at which both the habit of obedience by the population and the ruler's confidence in their own authority breaks down. Lenin's views thus, if only unconsciously, evoked echoes among revolutionaries of very different traditions from those of social democracy. At the same time the ostensible derivation of Lenin's views from Marx attracted the "Westerners," those who for generations past had decided that Russia must go the same way as Western Europe, both in the good and in the bad respects. The universality of Marxism guaranteed for them that the way would be the same: its optimism, that the ultimate triumph would be on the side of the good.

This fact that Lenin was "all things to all men" in the traditions of the Russian revolutionary world explained both his narrow victory in October 1917 and the difficulty which he found in holding it. For the socialists of all kinds, though not prepared to support him, were equally not ready to oppose him until their illusions had been cured by Bolshevism in practice. It was then too late. The Bolshevik victory in 1917 was a graveyard of many ideals, of much nobility and of much self-sacrifice. What a terrifying journey it has been from the "Remarkable Decade" to the concentration camps of Stalin! The police state of Nicholas the First is now replaced by the police state of Brezhnev and Kosygin. What happened to that revolution from which so many had hoped for so much? The same young men are still calling for the same liberties as their forefathers demanded a hundred and more years ago:

Our society needs now, like the air it breathes, an all-embracing democratisation. The right of minority groups to opposition must be established by law. The activity of the organs of authority must be placed under public control. . . . Only a democratic society is the true school of humanism.<sup>8</sup>

And, like their forefathers, they rot in gaol for having the courage to voice their demands—except that the gaols are if anything more brutal, and their inhabitants certainly very much more numerous. Oh, the pity of it all!

<sup>8</sup> Quoted from an "underground" document containing a comment by a group of the "technical intelligentsia" living in Estonia on Academician A. Sakharov's pamphlet "Progress, Co-existence and Intellectual Freedom." See "The Soviet Spiritual and Intellectual Ferment," by Peter Reddaway, *Frontier* (May 1969), p. 95.

## Second Beginning

By Asa Briggs

ECONOMIC HISTORIANS have never had their own way with the industrial revolution: perhaps for this reason many of them have been unhappy about the term with its obvious cross-references to politics and its implicit, if sometimes forgotten, comparison between experience in Britain and France. Yet it was not only the idea of industrial revolution which raised such issues. The term "industrialism" carried with it more than a narrowly economic set of concepts: like any other *ism* it had its advocates and its opponents. Shortly before his death St.-Simon commissioned Rouget de l'Isle to write a new industrial *Marseillaise*, and a *Chant des Industriels* was sung, in St.-Simon's presence, at the opening of a textile factory at St. Ouen in 1821.

In recent years it has become almost a platitude to say that the industrial revolution changed ways of feeling as much as it changed ways of working or thinking, and more attention has been paid by historians of literature and of art than ever before both to the responses of particular writers to the rise of modern industry and to the kind of society which was being "destroyed" or "created" in the process. And although the early British industrial revolution, portent rather than prototype, seemed to have only a limited amount to do directly with "science," science and technology which came together dramatically, if often falteringly, during the last decades of the 19th century have seldom been kept apart by the commentators. "The age of science and technology," Karl Jaspers has written comprehensively, "is a kind of second beginning, comparable to the first invention of tools and fire-making."

Within this extended context of inquiry Professor Landes' book,<sup>1</sup> for all its erudition, is somewhat disappointing. Its ambitious title

promises much. It is only at the end of the book, however, that the Prometheus myth is discussed—on the very last page—although it has been earlier introduced briefly along with the stories of the Tower of Babel and of Eve, the serpent and the tree of knowledge. Professor Landes admits that on the first occasion when he cited the stories of Eve and Prometheus and Daedalus to his academic colleagues as evidence of the age and continuity of the spirit of striving and mastery in Western culture, they objected that the content of the myths proved rather the hostility of Western tradition to insolent aspirations. He lets the matter slide. Why did he choose his title if he believes that "one can hardly rest a serious prognosis on symbol and legend"?

Imaginative reactions to industrial revolution or to industrialism do not, indeed, figure very prominently in Professor Landes' book—either the reactions of the first poets and pamphleteers or the recent reactions of the prophets of a "post-industrial society." It is not easy, therefore, to catch either the sense of excitement or the undercurrent of uneasiness. He concludes that

the West, at the very time when it is losing some of its own faith [why?] . . . is transferring its most profound and original heresy to others. It is a dangerous export, for aspirations and pretensions are not enough—indeed, are worse than nothing if not accompanied by the values and way of thought that promote effective performance.

It would have been helpful had Professor Landes explored more fully writers as different as John Nef and Raymond Williams, both of whom have tried to put "industrialism" into perspective and to trace the development of "new structures of feeling." Words like "striving" and "mastery" require as much examination as the word "industry" itself, which was thought of as a particular human attribute before it was identified as a sector of the

ASA BRIGGS is the editor of "Chartist Studies" (1959, Macmillan), and author of "Victorian Cities" (1964, Odhams) and (with John Saville) of "Essays in Labour History" (1967, Macmillan). He is Vice-Chancellor and Professor of History at the University of Sussex.

<sup>1</sup> *The Unbound Prometheus*. By DAVID S. LANDES. Cambridge University Press, 70s., \$8.50, paper, 25s. \$2.95.

economy. Metaphors like the "taming of Nature" require to be scrutinised. We can legitimately expect such examination and scrutiny in a book called *The Unbound Prometheus*.

Yet if we forget the title, which is not easy, Professor Landes' book is a considerable achievement of synthesis within economic history. It has grown out of the chapters which he wrote for the *Cambridge Economic History* and takes the story beyond 1914 where it originally stopped. It is not a textbook but an "essay in interpretation," and its footnotes cover most, if not all, of the contributions made by other economic historians to the economic history of the last hundred and fifty years. It is strong on comparison, weaker at points where economic history is itself still weak or unresolved, as, for example, on the relation between population change and industrialisation. It does not emphasise sufficiently, perhaps, the contrast between the "individualism" of 18th- and 19th-century industrialism and the "organisation" behind 20th-century industrialism, between the wastes of "carboniferous capitalism" and the complexities inherent in the 20th-century dependence on the most accurate computation. Yet it will be widely read and appreciated as the first "general, truly comparative survey of the course of the European industrial revolution." Professor Landes' own highly original work on French economic history obviously provided him with an excellent point of departure for the kind of comparative survey he has now accomplished, undoubtedly a *tour de force* in his own subject.

PROFESSOR MATHIAS' study of England<sup>2</sup> makes fewer claims. It is, indeed, a useful and well-arranged textbook based on lectures given in Cambridge. It notes in its preface that "new methods are bringing a wholly new style into economic history," but it does not seek to argue whether or not the "main single change" which is going on—"the challenge of an historical method based on 'literary' evidence and unsystematic data, with its own critical evaluation, by systematic quantitative analysis" is going to satisfy the desire to explain as well as to describe. Professor Mathias admits that "the search for a verified general theory of economic growth, and further incursions of even less integrated sociological theorising, suggests that the new attempts to measure and to analyse may yield more disparate than unified conclusions," but having made the admission he proceeds honestly and competently to make the

<sup>2</sup> *The First Industrial Nation*. By PETER MATHIAS. Methuen, 60s., paper, 28s.

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best of the new approach. His main comparative reference is not to Europe but to countries "wrestling with the problems of generating economic growth in developing societies in our own day," and it is well to be reminded that national income *per capita* in late nineteenth-century England may have been more than double that of a present-day undeveloped country, such as Nigeria, with a very large subsistence peasantry.

Some of the main difficulties in his presentation concern the terms of discourse. Words like "the state," "state intervention," "administrative controls" are more difficult to handle across time and place than the concept of "the market." So too is a word like "unemployment." It is one of the problems of re-writing economic history in the light of the current language of economics that the historical debate at any past moment of time is often highly simplified. Yet Professor Mathias does not neglect it. He also introduces an occasional moral judgment of his own with a significant heightening of tone.

Some of the apostles of *laissez-faire*, who resisted every limitation imposed upon employers by statute in the name of individual liberty and the boggy of impending commercial disaster, deserved to end up on the lowest ledges of Dante's inferno. It is a false assumption that industrialisation had no tragedies or iniquities to hide.

It is when Professor Mathias has to cover a vast mass of material relative to a long period of time that the problem-centred approach which he favours inevitably tends to awkward compression, as in the brief chapter on "Agriculture, 1815-1914." Likewise in his valuable chapter on "The Free Trade System and Capital Exports" he has little space to examine the significance of "empire." His epilogue on the inter-war years deals highly selectively with a period which in many respects now seems as remote as the early years of the industrial revolution. In this context Professor Landes' comparative analysis becomes particularly relevant. Britain by then had long ceased to be the only industrial nation or the first industrial nation in the league-table sense. How far did the distinctive British experience of industrialisation—industrialisation within a society which never completely accepted industrial values—prevent it from appreciating new possibilities? Yet how and why did it avoid the more dramatic consequences of economic breakdown which can be traced in other parts of the world? What was meant by "economic policy"? Of what issue could it *not* be said that "the question is many-

sided, with the policy recommendations always dependent on the diagnosis for the disease"?

IN HIS CHAPTER ON "The Organisation of Labour and Standards of Living" Professor Mathias touches briefly on what he calls the "negative reactions" to industrialisation—the outbreaks of machine-breaking, rick-burning, "in some ways" Chartism, "the survival of a notion characteristic of the pre-industrial world." *Captain Swing*<sup>3</sup> is a detailed study, the first since the Hammonds', of what the authors call "the most impressive episode in the farm-labourers' long and doomed struggle against poverty and degradation." It is an interesting and important book, but it reveals clearly that if it is difficult to sort out the complex reactions (negative or positive) to "industrialism," it is even more difficult to get inside the "primitive" minds of the early 19th-century agricultural labourers, "the secret people" as they have aptly been called. Dr. Hobsbawm and Dr. Rudé accumulate a mass of evidence, most of it new, but they find it very difficult to explain the pattern of local revolt. The basic aims of the village labourers seem to have been reasonably consistent—to attain a minimum living wage and to end rural unemployment (a word they did not use)—but their protest was "multiform." Even the most careful survey of what happened in different places does not point to a definite conclusion as to why some villages were quiet and others disturbed. None the less, the one clear consequence of the village labourers' revolt, "negative reaction" or not, was that threshing machines did not return to English farms on the old scale.

Of all the machine-breaking movements of the 19th century that of the helpless and unorganised farm labourers proved to be by far the most effective. The real name of King Ludd was Swing.

Dr. Hobsbawm and Dr. Rudé are sophisticated analysts of phenomena which may often have had very little to do with the advent of industry. Accepting as they do the necessity of industrial transformation, they insist that "it is difficult to find words for the degradation which the coming of industrial society brought to the English country labourer." We are back again at ways of thinking and feeling. The "second beginning" involves far more than statistics, and a bigger dose of Cobbett, who never had difficulty in finding words, would have brought more life into the account they give. "Literary guidance and unsystematic data" are still necessary to illuminate the human experience which is at the heart of all history, including economic history.

<sup>3</sup> *Captain Swing*. By E. J. HOBSBAWM and G. RUDÉ. Lawrence & Wishart, 70s.

# Prague: Spring & Fall

*Explaining the Czech Crisis — By Z. A. B. ZEMAN*

TWO AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL fragments by a man and a woman who were caught up in the Prague show trial of 1952, Eugene Loeb and Josefa Slanská<sup>1</sup>; two journalists' accounts of the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968, by Harry Schwartz and Joseph Wechsberg<sup>2</sup>; two books of documents<sup>3</sup>; two works of academic analysis,<sup>4</sup> one by Philip Windsor and Adam Roberts, the other edited by Robert Rhodes James. Those are the first volumes in a fast-growing library on the Czechoslovak communist reform movement.

Rudolf Slanský, a lifelong communist, a partisan leader in the 1944 Slovak uprising, a tough and ambitious man, since March 1945 the General Secretary of the party, was awarded the Order of Socialism on 30 July 1951. At the pinnacle of his power, he was to receive the greatest honour of all: the publication of his speeches and articles in a magnificent two-volume edition which would be dispatched to every local party organisation in the remotest villages in the country, and join the collected works of President Gottwald on the dusty shelves. Four months later Slanský was arrested and handed over to the secret police. There is no record that Slanský had been critical of its methods when he was in power. That did not make them any more humane. Severe mental pressure alternated with physical torture, an appeal to loyalty to the Party was followed by haggling about the actual terms of the bogus confession. The defences of the individual personality were knocked out, one after the other. The self-confidence of the former General Secretary disappeared first, the identity of Rudolf Slanský last. He was tried, sentenced to death, and executed in December 1952. The ashes of Slanský and ten other defendants were scattered on an icy cart-track somewhere in the vicinity of Prague.

Slanský did not know that he had been condemned a year before his execution. On

6 December 1951 Klement Gottwald reported to the Central Committee on the "treason of Slanský and the leading role he played in the conspiracy against the Party and the State." Gottwald, the President and the pre-war Party leader, had taken a vicious turn against his former comrades. Why? We may never know. The circumstances at the time provided only circumstantial evidence. Stalin's break with Tito was clean; the first slanging matches of the cold war had died down; the hot war in Korea was difficult to conclude. Stalin, in the process of consolidating his East European empire, ruled out a special Czechoslovak way to socialism. In Prague, Gottwald sacrificed his comrades to Stalin and political expediency. He thereby wiped out his lifelong work.

Neither of the two books of reminiscences, one by the General-Secretary's widow, the other by a former Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade who had been sentenced to life imprisonment at the same trial, attempt to solve that puzzle. But they answer, indirectly, another and more important question. The personal quality of their reminiscences sharply illuminates the origins of the Czechoslovak reform movement, why that movement had to happen. The medieval beastliness of the examination (Dr. Loeb remarks that afterwards "I was a completely normal person, apart from the fact that I had ceased to be human"); the pitiless farce of the trial; the animal passions that those trials evoked (people's joy at the swing of the wheel of fortune was probably the kindest of those emotions). And beyond the eerie public show there were tens of thousands of Czechs and

Z. A. B. ZEMAN is the author of *"The Break-up of the Habsburg Empire"* (1961, Oxford University Press), *"Nazi Propaganda"* (1964), and *"Prague Spring"* (1969, Penguin). He teaches history at the University of St. Andrews.

<sup>1</sup> *Sentenced and Tried*. By EUGENE LOEB. Elek Books, 42s.; *Report on My Husband*. By JOSEFA SLANSKÁ. Hutchinson, 35s.

<sup>2</sup> *Prague's 200 Days*. By HARRY SCHWARTZ. Pall Mall Press, 50s.; *The Voices*. By JOSEPH WECHSBERG. Doubleday, \$3.95.

<sup>3</sup> *Dubcek's Blueprint for Freedom*. Edited by HUGH LUNGH and PAUL ELLO. William Kimber, 50s. *The Czech Black Book*. Edited by ROBERT LITTELL. Pall Mall Press, 58s.

<sup>4</sup> *Czechoslovakia 1968*. By PHILIP WINDSOR and ADAM ROBERTS. Chatto & Windus, 15s.

Slovaks who became involved in the process. No community of people can indulge in such excesses of injustice and go on living in peace together or, still less, remain civilised. Herein lies one of the main sources of the reform movement. The two books have to be seen firmly in the context otherwise they might well, on the margins of the reading public, be passed on from the sadist to the masochist.

Harry Schwartz, the *New York Times* specialist on Soviet affairs, is rather kind in his book to the former President Novotný and hard on Mr. Dubček; otherwise he gives us a crisp chronological account of the Czechoslovak events. Joseph Wechsberg, another American journalist, wrote his more personal book, *The Voices*, while he was listening to the Czech "legal" underground network in August 1968. A Czech by origin, Mr. Wechsberg is a sophisticated writer and well up to the involved task of making a foreign country both intelligible and interesting to his English-speaking audience. Can he be right in his description of Czechoslovakia as "that lovely, lonely country"? Surely it has not been left alone enough. On several occasions in their history, the Czechs have had a nasty feeling of being very crowded in their corner of central Europe.

The documents Mr. Lunghi and Professor Ello have collected in Dubček's *Blueprint for Freedom* is not quite the book we have been waiting for. Of the four political documents (all there is to the book, plus introduction and commentaries) two at least have appeared in English before as pamphlets published in Prague. The selection should have been strengthened by one of the purely economic documents and by the best of the speeches from the very articulate and quotable record of the fourth writers' congress in 1967, published by their union last summer. The *Black Book* of the Historical Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences is, on the other hand, a publication the reviewer received with pleasure and read with avidity. Its editor, Mr. Robert Littell, cut down the original Czech text by about a third. The book may have been deprived of some of its historical authenticity but the story lost none of its excitement in the editing. Mr. Littell calls it "the victim's description of the crime." It is more than that. A dispassionate, blow-by-blow account of the seven days in August, it is a model of the way in which historical record may be established.

IT SHOULD BECOME required reading for anyone interested in European politics, and so should the essays in *Czechoslovakia 1968*, by two L.S.E. dons. The first one, by Mr. Philip Windsor, may be highly recommended to the attention of the members of the Party Prae-

sidium in Moscow; the second one, by Mr. Adam Roberts, to everyone who has doubts on the justification and effectiveness of the Czechoslovak passive resistance in August 1968.

The case for military action has been recently stated, with passion and eloquence, by Mr. Pavel Tigrid in his Paris *émigré* quarterly, *Svědectví*. (Tanks are not for being kicked at by boys wearing tennis shoes; they are for shooting at, by other tanks.) The same question was raised, in a more magisterial manner, in the scholarly London quarterly, *Government and Opposition*, and again in Mr. Kamil Winter's letter to *The Times* (6 June 1969). It is a crucial question for the Czechs because in that way they deepen their choicest inferiority complex. On two occasions in the last thirty years they have saved up for sophisticated military equipment and kept their troops polishing their buttons and boots, like good soldiers. On two occasions, the troops and the gear have remained confined to their barracks, garages, and hangars. The spotless army was given no opportunity to get soiled.

The Czechs were wrong not to have used their army in 1938. They were right in 1968. In his essay, Mr. Roberts gives most of the reasons why. In the small hours of 21 August their army was heavily outnumbered. On that day, the proportion of foreign to local troops on Czechoslovak territory was 3:1. The Czech army would have been cut to ribbons within days, if not hours. It was not prepared to meet an attack from the directions it came from; its strategic plans were known to the invading Powers; its intelligence was fully integrated into the Warsaw Pact system. The impulse for an armed action would have had to come from the Party Praesidium, which was divided.

After 1938, Mr. Roberts points out, Hitler had achieved the dismemberment and subjugation of Czechoslovakia in two easy moves: in 1968 the Russians and their allies ran into a spirited political and civil resistance. Under heavy pressure, the Czechs and the Slovaks maintained their unity. No alternative government, accommodating towards the occupying Powers, emerged. The President was able to bring party and government leaders from detention to the conference table. The spontaneous, intricate, and peaceful operation by the Czechs and Slovaks surprised the Warsaw Pact forces more than a conventional violent response would have done. It had a stunning effect on them: the people of Czechoslovakia have their August to look back to, with pride.

Mr. Windsor's subject is high strategy: what the events in Czechoslovakia looked like from the Kremlin and why the Soviet leaders in the end decided to ask their generals to deal with the situation. In his closely argued essay, Mr.



Windsor brings out well the contrast, in the early stages of the reform movement, between the novelty of Mr. Dubček's programme and his conventional foreign policy, and he properly stresses the new style, rather than new institutional forms, introduced into Czechoslovak politics by Dubček. He goes on to describe the growing isolation of the conservatives in the party as the movement of reform gathered momentum (a development with far-reaching consequences) and the way in which the balance between spontaneity and control was disrupted by the invasion.

Those points are however incidental to Mr. Windsor's main thesis. It is that Czechoslovakia was at the centre of a deep crisis in the Soviet Union itself and that, in Moscow's view, developments in Eastern Europe began threatening the cohesion of the Soviet military and diplomatic system more than the dispute with China. The uncertain touch in the treatment of Mr. Dubček and his friends by the Soviet authorities after the invasion, some significant discrepancies in the Soviet press and (most of all) the sharp contrast between the smoothness of the military operation and the unevenness of its political follow-through are Mr. Windsor's chief arguments. He may well be right. The high content of speculation is in the nature of his enterprise which often moves in the stratosphere where strategists feel most at home.

WHEN THE SOVIET LEADERS ordered the military to re-enter Czechoslovakia they acquired a political problem of the first magnitude. The earlier manoeuvres had made a lot of the points the Moscow Praesidium may have wished to make. They took a calculated risk, and we may only wonder why.

It seems that, in the spring and summer crisis, personalities came into play, almost as much as strategic plans. The communication between Prague and Moscow that had existed in the Novotný era almost entirely broke down under Dubček. Members of the Soviet diplomatic mission in Prague, Chervonenko and Udaltsov, had known Novotný and his men well but were out of touch with the reformers and forces they represented. This was especially true of the Slovaks. The Russians' acquaintance with Slovakia was largely confined to occasional hunting trips or travelling in sleeping cars, on their way to Moscow.

The contact was however resumed in an unsatisfactory, intermittent way early in the summer of 1968, by those Czechs and Slovaks who believed that their fellow-countrymen were going too far too fast. Vasil Bilak is a case in point. A shrewd politician who had been closely connected with the anti-Novotný movement in the

winter of 1967-8, he held a very realistic view of the line-up of the forces inside the Prague Praesidium at the time. But he was a Communist who had spent all his adult life in a party which upheld two basic beliefs: that its power in the State should be in no way limited and that the Soviet Union was the best guarantee of the Party's position. He saw no reason why the situation should change and behaved in a way the Russians expected Dubček to behave. By taking a hard detached look at the party Dubček put himself outside it as far as the Russians were concerned.

It may be that uncertainty about the position of the Party, all the vested interests of the Party and bureaucratic élite (it is difficult to imagine members of the Moscow Praesidium having differences on that point), combined with an uncertainty as to what Dubček and his comrades were exactly up to, created deep concern in Moscow. In addition, the firm embrace by the Kiesinger-Brandt coalition of the East-West *détente* as the policy which would make the reunification of Germany possible, as well as the accompanying diplomatic practices, made a powerful impact in Moscow. (See the analysis of Russia's European policy by Richard Lowenthal, in his *ENCOUNTER* articles, January and February 1969.) Fear of Germany gave the East European block its cohesion: the Russians are finding the handling of a reasonable Germany difficult. (It is not surprising; the historical record since the peace of Brest-Litovsk in 1918 speaks for itself.) Anyway, an understanding with Washington combined with a tough European policy may suit Moscow better.

THE STUDY EDITED by Mr. Robert Rhodes James has a useful chronology (but why "select"?) of the Czechoslovak events; otherwise it covers a ground similar to Mr. Windsor's. It is an expanded version of a background paper which was put before a conference of experts at the Institute of International Organisations at Sussex University in October 1968; the individual contributions disappear in the homogenised text. In what we may assume to be the collective view of the conference, the Czechoslovak crisis "has been a salutary reminder that *realpolitik* remains a dominant factor in European, and world, politics. And it is here argued that such a conclusion is not necessarily a depressing one." Depressing, not; trite, certainly.

Among the first contingent of Czechoslovak books, Mr. Philip Windsor's and Mr. Adam Roberts' *Czechoslovakia 1968*, and the *Black Book*, have an obviously lasting quality. Future writers will probably have to take a closer look at the developments in Czechoslovakia before August 1968 and set them against their proper



European background. In Czechoslovakia of 1968 the inner mechanism of a communist régime lay revealed, a spectacle fascinating for the historian and the student of politics. They have their work cut out for them, and it will

not be easy. Neither of our leading British centres for the study of Eastern Europe, in London or in Oxford, has any of the newspapers and periodicals that played the major role in the Czechoslovak movement of reform.

## The Tucholsky Complaint

By Walter Z. Laqueur

THE STUDY OF GERMANY during the Weimar period has become a fashionable subject of late, and it is not difficult to see why. My American students certainly find it more interesting than the history of Britain and France—not to mention Italy or Russia—during that period; it all seems, to use the inevitable adjective, so relevant. The study of this Periclean age of *avant-garde* culture, youth revolt, sexual experimentation and radical politics seems to provide not only interesting raw material for dissertations but also inspiration for the present day. There are undoubtedly certain parallels, some of them rather disturbing in view of what followed the Weimar period. In a review in the *New York Times* (24 Nov. 1968) of Peter Gay's fascinating little book<sup>1</sup> I singled out some of the achievements of this exciting decade, as well as the moral relativism and political naiveté so characteristic of that epoch, the dominant position in it of so many fake gurus, the enthusiasm for revolutionaries in far-away countries, the lack of tact and commonsense among the intellectuals. Reading Mr. Deak<sup>2</sup> and re-reading Mr. Gay I now realise that there is one aspect which is usually neglected or glossed over, perhaps because it is so delicate and yet it is one of the key issues.

I mean, of course, the Jewish question.

Mr. Deak's book, I ought to add in explanation, is a political history of the *Weltbühne* and its circle; the *Weltbühne* was an independent left-wing weekly, immensely stimulating and highly readable, often very witty, the implacable enemy of both the nationalist Right and the Social Democratic establishment. The majority

of its contributors and, no doubt, most of its readers were Jews. Mr. Deak is a little too generous towards his heroes:

They were never destructive [he writes] on the contrary, they aimed at redemption, they dreamed of a socialist society with democratic instrumental forms. . . .

The evidence does not bear out such charitable assumptions. Kurt Tucholsky, the leading spirit of the circle, said that since 1913 he had belonged to those people "who think that the German spirit is poisoned almost beyond recovery, who do not believe in an improvement, who regard German democracy as a façade and a lie." How could he be anything but destructive if he did not believe in a possible recovery? True, the members of the circle had their dreams of a socialist society, of pacifism and humanism, but the writers of the *Weltbühne* lacked the political and economic experience (and often also the necessary common sense) to provide any valid answers to the most pressing problems facing Germany at the time. The singular lack of impact of this circle, its political sterility, is surely connected with the fact that these were Jewish writers who, with all their talent, were quite oblivious to one basic existential fact: that they were living in an intellectual ghetto, that the great majority of Germans did not just dislike them, but disputed their very right to have a voice as far as the future of Germany was concerned. The fact that these *Weltbühne* contributors believed that they were *das andere Deutschland*, the other Germany, the conscience of the German nation, was not of the slightest significance to anyone but themselves. Nor did it matter that most of them had no longer any tie with the Jewish community, or like Tucholsky were actually converts to Protestantism.

To explain their singular lack of resonance

WALTER LAQUEUR is Director of the Institute of Contemporary History in London and a Professor in the History of Ideas at Brandeis University in the U.S.A. Among his recent works are "Young Germany" (1962, Routledge), and "Russia and Germany" (1965), published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson, who also brought out his anthology "The Israel-Arab Reader" earlier this year.

<sup>1</sup> *Weimar Culture*. By PETER GAY. Harper & Row, \$5.95; Secker & Warburg, 50s.

<sup>2</sup> *Weimar Germany's Left Wing Intellectuals*. By ISTVAN DEAK. University of California Press, \$9.75; IBEG (2-4 Brook Street, London, W.1), 93s.

and to illustrate the whole background against which they worked, it may be useful to refer to a controversy that had taken place a decade earlier.

IN MARCH 1913 a young Jewish writer named Moritz Goldstein published an article entitled "German-Jewish Parnassus" in the fortnightly *Kunstwart* which created something of a minor scandal, provoked some 90 letters to the editor, and was discussed for years throughout the German press. Goldstein argued, to put it briefly, that the Jews were managing the culture of a people which denied them both the right and the capacity to do so. The newspapers in the capital were about to become a Jewish monopoly; almost all directors of the Berlin theatres were Jews; so were many actors. German musical life without the Jews was almost unthinkable; and the study of German literature was also to a large extent in Jewish hands. Everyone knew it, only the Jews pretended it was not worthy of notice; for what mattered, they claimed, were their achievements, their cultural and humanistic activities. This, said Goldstein, was a dangerous fallacy for "the others do not feel that we are Germans." We could show the others that we were not inferior (his argument continued), but wasn't it naïve to assume that this would in any way diminish their dislike and antipathy? There was a basic anomaly in the Jewish situation. The liberal Jewish intellectuals were good Europeans, but they were also split personalities, divorced from the people amidst whom they were living. They could make a great contribution to science, for science knew no national borders. But in literature and the arts (and he should have added: in the political sphere) any major initiative had to be rooted in a popular and national framework. From Homer to Tolstoy all the really great works had their origins in the native soil, the homeland, the people. And this "rootedness" the Jews were lacking, despite all their intellectual and emotional efforts.

Among those who answered Goldstein there was the poet Ernst Lissauer, who during the first World War received notoriety in connection with his "Hate England" song. He bitterly opposed any attempt to restore a ghetto on German soil or a "Palestinian enclave"; on the contrary, the process of assimilation was to be carried to its successful conclusion. If so many Jewish intellectuals were radicals and had as yet no feeling for the German national spirit, this was, no doubt, because they were as yet discriminated against in so many ways. But once these barriers would fall they, too, would be fully integrated into the mainstream of German life.

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Ten years later a republic had been installed, and Jewish intellectuals were no longer impeded in their professional careers: they became professors, government officials, even cabinet ministers. Many still belonged to the radical fringe, more, in effect, than in Wilhelminian Germany. This affinity between Jewish intellectuals and radicalism had deep historical roots. Lissauer's explanation was at best only half true; the people he was writing about had not been radical in politics because they were out merely for personal betterment. At least in passing it ought to be mentioned that the political commitment of these intellectuals did not by any means reflect the orientation of the German Jewish Community as a whole which, as Professor Turi has recently shown in a massive and highly informative study, was always surprisingly "*Staatstreu*," giving consistent electoral support to the centre parties. But who was interested in the voting patterns of half a million Jews? What mattered were the men and women in the limelight, from Marx to Rosa Luxemburg, from Kurt Eisner to Kurt Tucholsky: that was the "Jewish element" in German politics as far as public opinion was concerned.

IN 1928 Tucholsky published a copiously illustrated volume of little notes and essays: *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*. This was a broadside against the *Reichswehr*, the Church, the judiciary (formerly the people of *Dichter und Denker*, the Germans had become a nation of *Richter und Henker*, Judges and executioners), the beer-drinking students, Hindenburg, the Social Democratic commanders of the Prussian police, Stresemann, trade union secretaries, and almost everyone else in a position of authority. It was an all-out attack not just against the German *Philister*, his customs, the way he arranged his bourgeois home and educated his children but against the German way of life in general, a denunciation not merely of militarism but of national defence as such. ("There is no secret of the German army I would not hand over readily to a foreign power," Tucholsky wrote.) He ridiculed not just the veteran associations with their chauvinistic slogans and parades, but derided systematically and with great skill all and any manifestation of patriotism. The impression that emerged was that everything specifically German was *a priori* bad, and had to be eradicated. In an article on "The Face of a German" Tucholsky depicted the average German *à la* George Grosz:

A rather thick-set head, a none-too-high forehead; cold, small eyes, a nose that likes to lower itself into a drinking glass, a disagreeable toothbrush moustache. . . .

It was a caricature of Weimar Germany, some of it quite true, much of it distorted—all in questionable taste.

"For 225 pages we have said *no*"—Tucholsky concluded his book, "now we wanted to say *yes*. Yes to the landscape and to the countryside of Germany." But there are beautiful landscapes all over the globe. Tucholsky in any case preferred Paris to Germany. ("Here no one steps on my toes, here people are kind and polite, here the cars travel smoothly and fast, here clouds are still clouds and stones are still stones, here it still makes sense to be alive.") Some of the pictures in the book are very funny indeed; others are embarrassing or, in a perspective of 40 years simply inexplicable. The one which scandalised most people at the time was a *photo montage*, "Animals Look at You," showing eight somewhat decrepit and rather ugly gentlemen, aged 65 or above, most of them in military uniform. It is a pathetic sight, but there is nothing particularly animal or evil about them given the unfortunate fact of life that men usually look more handsome and virile at thirty than at seventy and that babies are more likely to smile than retired generals and admirals. Did Tucholsky mean to imply that the German army and police needed better-looking officers? If so, they certainly got them a few years later; Heydrich, for instance, was a man of striking appearance.

In an essay not long ago Gordon Craig noted that Tucholsky's great weakness, shared by most of the engaged writers of his period, was a lack of selectivity about his targets; he was indiscriminate in this respect and immoderate in his expenditure of ammunition. Tucholsky and his friends thought that the German Judge of their day was the most evil person imaginable and that the German prisons were the most inhumane; later they got Freisler and Auschwitz. They imagined that Stresemann and the Social Democrats were the most reactionary politicians in the world; soon after they had to face Hitler, Goebbels, and Goering. They sincerely believed that fascism was already ruling Germany, until the horrors of the Third Reich overtook them. Their period was one of unprecedented political freedom in Germany, when the leaders of the Weimar Republic—to quote another recent historian—exhausted their energies in hard combat with Hugenberg and Hitler:

Tucholsky stood aside and jeered at them. They could have used help. All they got was scorn and laughter.

It is easy to understand the reasons for the present Tucholsky renaissance among the New Left in West Germany today.

WHAT CONCERNS ME IN THIS CONTEXT is not so much the view of the *Weltbühne* circle and their judgment of the political situation. I happen to believe that it was, to say the least, grossly oversimplified. But even if their appraisal had been correct, if German democracy was a sham in 1929, if fascism to all intents and purposes had already prevailed, the publication of books like *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles* would still not have served any useful purpose. This is not to say that a man or a group of men should not stand up for their convictions however radical, and however dangerous the consequences. But Tucholsky and his friends should have at least understood what dilemma they were facing. They could have argued that as Europeans and humanists, as socialists and pacifists, they had a sacred duty to resist the rising wave of chauvinism. Since they lived in Germany and wrote in German they considered they had a right to have their say on Germany's future and to be listened to with respect. Unfortunately, this is not how most other Germans saw it. Since they were Jews their position in German politics and society was shaky anyway—and a man like Tucholsky remained a Jew even if baptised seven times over. By making no effort whatsoever to differentiate between patriotism and maniacal chauvinism, between legitimate or normal national interests and aggressive revanchist politics they finally disqualified themselves even in the eyes of their friends on the Left, socialists and Communists alike. If Tucholsky was convinced that there was no longer any hope, that the corruption had proceeded too far, what indeed was the point of carrying on the struggle? These were not insensitive men but they had no real roots themselves and, therefore, they lacked the sensorium for the patriotic feeling of their fellow-citizens. They were incapable of understanding anyone who reacted differently from the way they did.

MORITZ GOLDSTEIN, who wrote that controversial and prophetic article before the first World War, emigrated to the United States when Hitler came to power. On one occasion, in his old age, he again wrote about the affair and commented on its implications. Comparing the German and the American situation, he dwelt upon the heavy concentration of American Jews in all branches of literature, the theatre, films, music, etc. But he also noted the profound differences. The European concept of culture was not fully valid on the other side of the Atlantic; there was no talk about that semi-mystical entity called *Volksseele*, the inner mind of the nation. There was no fear that the mind of the nation would be polluted by any foreign admixture. On the contrary, America was the classical country of

immigrants; everyone was equal, and belonged to the nation; every divisive trend was disparaged, and considered unpatriotic. "Anti-semitic utterances in private or public seem to be unknown," Goldstein wrote. No opposition had been voiced against the participation of Jews in cultural activities. But, he added almost as an afterthought, the day may come when the Americans, too, will be concerned about the true mind of their nation, and then the question will be raised whether American Jews are Americans or strangers.

Mr. Goldstein's second article was written in 1956; when he said "the day may come" he meant "in a hundred or even two hundred years hence." Events during the last decade have moved faster than he anticipated. There has been something of a problem all along, and it has become more acute in recent years. In some American circles the Tucholsky Syndrome has been rapidly spreading. (Perhaps I am doing an injustice to the late star of the *Weltbühne*; in comparison with the author of *Muckbird* he was, of course, a giant.) A radical force has come into being even more emphatic in its rejection of America, its way of life and the aspirations of most of its citizens than the opposition of the writers of the *Weltbühne* to the Weimar Republic. Its more extreme members are firmly



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convinced that fascism has already prevailed, that American prisons are worse than Nazi concentration camps, that American policemen are more vicious than the *Gestapo*. There are countless publications which take up with a vengeance the theme of *Deutschland, Deutschland* *über alles* opposing not just American policy at home and abroad but deriding patriotism, the national symbols, traditional values, venerable traditions. Many leaders of the movement and a high percentage of their followers are of Jewish origin. Everyone knows it, though it is still not often mentioned in public. The majority of American Jews has not much sympathy with the movement. But this is of no great consequence. As in Germany in the Weimar period what matters are those who are in the limelight; it is Mark Rudd and not the Hassidic rabbis of Brooklyn who determines the public image.

JEWISH INTELLECTUALS are drawn towards the camp of progress and social justice in politics following an old and honourable tradition. They feel (to quote an early forerunner, the German radical democrat Johan Jacoby) every folly and every misery of mankind as if they were personally affected. Those with a particular Western European background have realised more

acutely than others the great dangers of Nationalism. It is, perhaps, not without relevance in this context that in Israel too the movement for an Arab-Jewish *rapprochement* from the very beginning has been largely constituted by Jews from Germany and the United States. But by this very same tradition they have had (with the exception of the Zionists), no feelings for the importance of the national element. Having been for so long in their history a people without a state and a homeland, total rejection has always come much easier to some of them than to most of their fellow citizens.

I hope I shall not be reminded that present-day America is in a hundred ways different from Weimar Germany and that history never exactly repeats itself. This, of course, goes without saying. But it is equally true that there are certain recurring patterns in Jewish as in general history. The issues are complex, and a discussion of their many aspects leads one beyond the confines of a brief article. I do not want to carry my argument beyond this point and to speculate about the future place of American Jews in the cultural life or the radical movement of their country.

But there is reason for concern: problems of this character are not usually resolved by turning a blind eye.

## Blimps with Little Red Flags

By Peter Fryer

IN 1937 a British communist wrote an unofficial history of his party, and it was attacked by a fellow-communist with such ferocity that an apology had to be made; the book, by Tom Bell, was nevertheless repudiated by the party's Secretariat. Its critic, Allen Hutt, had held that "a strong case can be made out against the conception of a *separate* History of the Communist Party at this stage." Three decades later, the British communists have at last plucked up courage to examine their own history.<sup>1</sup> To be sure, only the first seven years are

dealt with in these first two volumes—and even their promised successor will "probably" not carry the story beyond 1932. Nor does the examination pretend to be objective or, save in quite superficial respects, critical. It is, however, official. And the choice of James Klugmann as Official Historian tells us much about the party's present frame of mind, its attitude to its past, and its hopes for the future.

Klugmann's previous attempt at communist

PETER FRYER was in Hungary as a correspondent for the *Communist Daily Worker* when the 1956 uprising broke out, and his brief book on those events was a remarkable document. He has since published "The Birth Controllers" (1965, Secker & Warburg) and "Private Case: Public Scandal" (1966). His most recent article in *ENCOUNTER* was "A Map of the Underground" (October 1967).

<sup>1</sup> James Klugmann, *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain*, vol. I: Formation and Early Years, 1919–1924; vol. II: 1925–1927: The General Strike. (Lawrence & Wishart, 63s., 70s.)

Allen Hutt, "How Not to Write Communist History," *Labour Monthly*, XIX (1937), p. 382, reviewing Tom Bell, *The British Communist Party: a Short History* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1937). For statements by the Editorial Board ("the tone of this review was far too sharp and personal") and C.P. Secretariat ("this book should not be considered as a history of the Party"), see *Labour Monthly*, XIX (1937), p. 453.

historiography has itself a sad history. Entitled *From Trotsky to Tito*, and published in 1951, it accused Tito and his colleagues of learning their tactics "from Hitler and Goebbels."<sup>2</sup> In 1956, following the Soviet-Yugoslav *rapprochement* and the Khrushchev revelations, this book was withdrawn. Its author has never ventured publicly to explain how he came to write it, or to subject it to any kind of self-critical examination, or to draw any lessons from having allowed himself to be so grievously misled by fabricated evidence. But he does seem to have learnt one thing. Throughout the first volume of his new history there is no mention of Trotsky, who was one of the most prominent leaders of the international communist movement in those early years (and whose informed interest in British politics was to be shown in his *Where Is Britain Going?*, written early in 1925). And the second volume dismisses the C.P.G.B.'s early encounter with "Trotskyism" in just one page. No doubt it is better to play safe than be sorry a second time.

If Klugmann's new book, unlike his earlier one, has no villain, it certainly does not lack a hero. The hagiography is a shade subtler than it used to be when personality cults were unbridled. Nevertheless, a young Lancashire boilermaker, not yet thirty years of age when the Communist Party of Great Britain was founded, is here credited with a degree of political wisdom and initiative that would have been remarkable in one twice his years. Almost single-handed, it appears, he carried through the party's reorganisation from an uneasy conflation of propagandist sects into a democratic-centralist proletarian vanguard, with "fractions," "nuclei," and "Party training" (and with an elaborate apparatus of Political Bureau, Organising Bureau, and Secretariat to run a party of a few thousand members)—a process known at the time, though Klugmann coyly conceals the fact in the first volume and is understandably apologetic about it in the second, as "*Bolshevization*." This young man alone, if Klugmann is to be believed, was immune from political error. Glancing neither to Right nor "Left," flirting with neither opportunism nor sectarianism, he "personally" stopped the *Jolly George*, carrying munitions for use against Soviet Russia, in 1919; corrected the sectarian approach of the British Bureau of the Red International of Labour Unions (*Profintern*) in 1921; and edited the party's first daily news-

paper in 1922.<sup>3</sup> It was he, not J. R. Campbell, who wrote the "Open Letter to the Fighting Forces" that sparked off the famous "Campbell case" in 1924.

This paragon was Harry Pollitt, and one would hardly guess from Klugmann's account that he was not from the outset the party's "leader," as it later became mandatory to style him. Even when Klugmann records the setting up of a Central Women's Department at the party Centre, he finds it necessary to add a solemn footnote: "With Harry Pollitt as one of its members" (I, p. 338, n. 5). By comparison, the party's secretary during most of the period covered, Albert Inkpin, emerges as a shadowy and colourless figure; and it will be interesting to see how Klugmann and his collaborator in the promised third volume, Jack Cohen, deal with Pollitt's eventual appointment as general secretary, as late as 1929, on Moscow's insistence and against the wishes of a large number of members.

KLUGMANN WRITES in the emphatic, repetitive, itemising style so familiar to those who have ever sat at his unstraying feet during one of his lectures, with their headings, sub-headings, and sub-sub-headings neatly ticked off on his fingers. Whole chunks of those lecture notes,

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<sup>2</sup> James Klugmann, *From Trotsky to Tito* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1951), p. 157.

<sup>3</sup> This was the short-lived *Daily Communist* (Glasgow), the date of whose first issue Klugmann gives variously as 11 November 1922 (I, p. 189, n. 4) and 10 November (I, p. 218).

key words underlined, are here transcribed, *mutatis non mutandis*, with such results as these:

Of those who, on the surface, *were* convinced, *some* still saw such participation as a purely *negative* act. . . Nor did they see how the *combined* struggle, inside and outside, *could* win concrete gains. . . (I, p. 195).

It showed what *could* be achieved by a *united* working class ready to *fight* for its demands by *militant* action, including the *strike* weapon on *political* as well as *economic* issues (I, p. 87).

It was necessary . . . to win *support* for the colonial peoples' struggles, to see that this was a *common* struggle that *equally* concerned British workers and colonial peoples, . . . and to call for an *equal fraternal* struggle of comrades facing a common enemy and to give, where possible, *direct* support to the struggles of the the colonial people (II, p. 293).

Such a style might be tolerable if one could rely on Klugmann's accuracy. But he is unsure even of the date on which his party was born. On page 167 of the first volume we read:

The C.P.G.B. was formed on August 1, 1920. From August 2 it became the major target of hatred, slander, attack of the capitalist class and its propaganda machine.

Sixty pages later, this becomes:

The Communist Party of Great Britain was founded on July 31, 1920. From August 1, 1920, it has been the most attacked, slandered, smeared organisation from the side of the British capitalist press (I, p. 229).

Again, slips of this sort might not matter overmuch if one could be sure of Klugmann's desire to find out the truth and tell it to his readers. Unfortunately, he is evasive, not to say

<sup>4</sup> From its first issue (May 1921) to the end of 1924, the *Communist Review* ran five articles by Zinoviev, four by Trotsky, three each by Bukharin and Radek, and one by Stalin.

<sup>5</sup> *Report of the Executive Committee of the C.P.G.B. (1922)*, as quoted by L. J. Macfarlane, *The British Communist Party: its Origin and Development until 1929* (MacGibbon & Kee, 1966), p. 75. Macfarlane's useful account should be supplemented, for the period 1920-26, by two articles of "Joseph Redman" (Brian Pearce): "British Communist History," *Labour Review*, II (1957), pp. 106-10; "The Early Years of the CPGB," *Labour Review*, III (1958), pp. 11-22.

<sup>6</sup> *Speeches & Documents of the Sixth (Manchester) Conference of the Communist Party of Great Britain (1924)*, p. 51. The changes "*insisted upon*" (my italics—P.F.) included the reorganisation of the Political Bureau, with Pollitt and William Gallacher replacing J. T. Murphy and Bob Stewart, and the addition of Arthur Horner and Wal Hannington as full members and J. R. Campbell and J. Walton Newbold as substitute members.

slippery, precisely on those points where his party's critics are eager to have the benefit of his researches in those "seldom-examined archives" the blurb alludes to. In particular, he is evasive about his party's relations with the Communist International, and about the closely connected question of the party's internal disputes. The Comintern is here castrated. Orders from Moscow? Instructions? Intervention? One can see Klugmann's sad smile<sup>4</sup> as, half melancholy and half amused at the critics' cynicism, he portrays the Comintern and its Russian masters and paymasters as a rather jolly, helpful bunch, who had the true interests of the British workers at heart. When, that is, he bothers to mention the Comintern at all.

The names of its leading members, apart from Lenin, cannot for the most part be given, since they later perished in Stalin's purges or were otherwise disposed of, and their present status is doubtful. Thus we are told that "many of the leading Soviet revolutionaries of the day" (I, pp. 216-17) wrote for the party's monthly journal, *Communist Review*; but we are not told who they were.<sup>4</sup> It is unlucky for Klugmann that the "Zinoviev letter" affair forces him to name the still unluckier Zinoviev—though even then he cannot bring himself to admit that Zinoviev was at that time president of the Comintern Executive. Klugmann's otherwise very detailed account of the party reorganisation in 1922-23 makes no reference to the Comintern Commission, appointed to investigate the British C.P.; nor to the Commission's failure to arrive in Britain; nor to a certain Comrade Peet's successful trip to the Continent to "seek out the commission" and bring it home with him; nor to its subsequent "exhaustive inquiries into the whole of the party's affairs"; nor to the special meeting of the Comintern Executive, held in Moscow in February 1922 to discuss the British party's problems, attended by its chairman Arthur MacManus (whose ashes rest in the Kremlin wall).<sup>5</sup>

Klugmann claims that the change of leadership "in 1922," "far from being . . . the imposition by the Communist International of a new leadership on the British Party, was much rather the reverse" (I, p. 212). (If this means anything at all, it means that the British party imposed a new leadership on the Comintern: a novel suggestion.) But what about the change in the summer of 1923, not 1922, when the British party's entire Central Committee set sail for Moscow to confer with the Comintern for the best part of a month? Did not the Central Committee's organisational report to the next party congress (Manchester, May 1924) speak of changes "*insisted upon* by the Presidium of the Comintern"?<sup>6</sup> (According to Klugmann (II,

p. 349), the Comintern Executive did not have a Presidium to do any insisting; this is an outrageous error.) Only one passing and exceedingly uninformative reference is made to the role of the official Comintern representatives in Britain, Michael Borodin ("George Brown") and D. Petrovsky ("A. J. Bennet"), and they are not named.<sup>7</sup> Not least, no reference whatever is made to the British party leaders' sudden decision, in the summer of 1924, to oppose "Trotskyism": a decision taken without the membership being consulted, after the Central Committee had heard a report from Petrovsky on the controversy in the Russian party,<sup>8</sup> and only four months after the party's journals had been presenting Trotsky's case with scrupulous fairness. So when Klugmann, towards the end of the second volume, at last brings himself to record the British party's anti-Trotsky resolutions of November 1924, May-June 1925, and August 1926—the discussions within the Russian C.P. and the Comintern having been mysteriously "brought to the attention of the British Party" (II, p. 327)—he writes, misleadingly, as if this had been the start of the struggle against "Trotskyism" in Britain. No mention of Petrovsky's report. No mention of the way the party Executive condemned Trotsky's *The Lessons of October* (1924) without having read more than a summary of it—or the way the inimitable Andrew Rothstein told those who objected to this hasty decision that "they have a terrible deal to learn yet before they become real Communists." No mention of Rothstein's reference to Lenin's so-called "Testament" as "a gross forgery," or of R. Page Arnot's statement that the Trotsky opposition in Russia was confined to a few students and of no interest to the Russian workers.<sup>9</sup>

ONE NEED NOT AGREE with all or even part of Trotsky's early critique of Stalinism to object to Klugmann's account of how it was received in the British party. The point is not who

<sup>7</sup> Petrovsky's British wife, Rose Cohen, disappeared in Moscow during the '30s. I cannot say whether the British party leaders tried, then or subsequently, to find out what happened to her or what she was accused of. According to a prominent woman member of the C.P., "she must have opened her big mouth too wide. . . ."

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Workers' Weekly*, 6 June 1924.

<sup>9</sup> *Workers' Weekly*, 23 January 1925. These statements were made at the celebrated London "aggregate" (general membership meeting) of 17 January 1925, where an amendment regretting the Party leaders' hasty vote against Trotsky was defeated by a considerable majority. This not unimportant meeting is dealt with by Klugmann in forty words.

proved right in the controversy but how the British leaders handled it. They swallowed, or pretended to swallow, everything the Russian leaders told them. They passed virtually overnight from fulsome praise of Trotsky to wholesale condemnation, and they did so before enough evidence was available to enable any responsible student of politics to make up his mind. Here we have the earliest example of Stalinist methods inside the British C.P. There are of course countless later examples, many of which are still more shameful and, no doubt, of more pressing current importance. But here was how it began. Here was the first occasion on which Moscow took snuff and the British leaders obediently sneezed. It is obviously of the greatest interest to students of British working-class history to examine this first example in some detail. But Klugmann conceals so much and distorts so much that his book, on this as on so many other aspects of his subject, is practically valueless to the serious student.

Thus he dismisses Trotsky's article on "Problems of the British Labour Movement," published in the *Communist International* magazine in 1926, as presenting "a picture of a helpless Communist Party" and containing "an acutely sectarian approach to the Left in the Labour Movement" (II, p. 327, n. 5)—

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LONGMANS



though no less an authority than R. Palme Dutt was to repeat Trotsky's criticisms at length, if without acknowledgment, in the September 1926 *Labour Monthly*, though similar criticisms of the "Left" group on the T.U.C. General Council were contained in the Comintern's June 1926 "Theses on the British General Strike," and though Trotsky's "sectarian approach" was as the cooing of doves compared with the "social-fascist" terminology to be adopted by the C.P. from 1929 to 1933.

ONE CAN SYMPATHISE with the Official Historian. If he were to devote more than a page to the Trotsky controversy, he could hardly avoid retailing some highly embarrassing stories. Here is one that has escaped his net. Trotsky's *Lenin* (Eng. translation, 1925) was condemned in the *Labour Monthly* as "the book of a sick and neurotic man . . . as pathetic a book as was ever unwisely given to the world," and in the *Communist Review* as "a complete failure"—whereupon J. F. Horrabin pointed out that the only section of the book yet published in the British press had been featured as the star item in the previous July's *Labour Monthly*, edited by Dutt, "but that was before the Party ukase against Trotsky had gone forth; so that, presumably, its poor quality was not apparent to faithful Communists at that time." Horrabin went on to remark that "some folks—on certain subjects—do their thinking to order."<sup>10</sup>

How a historian of British communism treats the Trotsky controversy of the 1920s is a touchstone of his integrity. Klugmann's page on this topic falls below the standard, low as it is, of the rest of his book.

AS FOR DOMESTIC DISPUTES, Klugmann omits them whenever he can; and when he cannot, he glosses over them by choosing the less outspoken contributions to controversies and parading these as if he had done all that scholarship

requires. For example, he refers in a footnote (I, p. 325) to criticisms of the leadership made by A. Hawkins and E. W. Cant early in 1924, but omits J. T. Murphy's complaint about the lack of discussion in the party and T. A. Jackson's still more trenchant and prescient words:

Is an ignorant membership necessary to the working of the plan of organisation . . . ? . . . Our job is only to carry out all instructions at the double, and stand to attention until the next order comes. . . . This . . . is . . . the sort of Party that seems to be desired by many who have had a hand in the process of re-organisation during the past 16 months.<sup>11</sup>

And that, of course, was the sort of party they got: a party of yes-men, doing their thinking to order, rubber-stamping the decisions of whoever happened to be in power in the Kremlin with such alacrity that, by 1926, Thaelmann could note (*Inprecorr*, 17 March 1926) that it was the one major party that had no differences with the Comintern Executive, while Stalin himself could praise it as "one of the best sections of the Communist International."<sup>12</sup>

IN HIS SECOND VOLUME, Klugmann's main concern is to glorify the British Communist Party's contribution to the 1926 General Strike. His chapter on this topic runs, with appendices, to 140 pages. He admits there were weaknesses in the party's political appeals and statements during the Strike, but he finds them "*overwhelmingly correct*." As for its practical activity, that was nothing short of "magnificent" (II, p. 193).

Validating this claim causes the Official Historian some embarrassment. He has to show that the communists were the most active, energetic, courageous, self-sacrificing, and altogether magnificent members of the various local committees that sprang up during the Strike. But he has to do so without offending non-communist readers, who may be aware that a certain number of non-communists also organised, picketed, and got themselves arrested and sent to prison. So he hops gingerly from one foot to another. On the one hand, "the Communist Party had pioneered the campaign for many of the forms of action which became essential parts of the activity of the most effective strike committees and Councils of Action." On the other hand, "no one should attempt to paint the tremendous apparatus of strike committees and Councils of Action . . . as the monopoly of the Communists." On the one hand, "Communists were everywhere in the most active mass pickets, editing and distributing bulletins, manning key positions in the strike committees and Councils

<sup>10</sup> W. N. Ewer, *Labour Monthly*, VII (1925), p. 250. Arthur MacManus, *Communist Review*, VI (1925-26), p. 47. *The Plebs*, XVII (1925), p. 214.

<sup>11</sup> *Communist Review*, IV (1923-24), p. 539. Tommy Jackson, a formidable theoretician, lecturer, and activist of the period, is virtually ignored in Klugmann's book. One looks in vain, for instance, in the accounts of the party's unsuccessful applications for affiliation to the Labour Party, for Jackson's often-quoted words about taking the Labour Party leaders by the hand "as a preliminary to taking them by the throat!" (*The Communist*, 25 March 1922, p. 8).

<sup>12</sup> J. V. Stalin, *Works*, vol. VIII (Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954), p. 173.

of Action," and "Communist Party members were initiators, organisers, activists" on "many of the best" of the Councils of Action in London. On the other hand, "thousands and tens of thousands of non-Communist miners and other militant trade unionists, I.L.P.'ers, members of Constituency Labour Parties, helped to form and man the Councils of Action."<sup>13</sup>

Klugmann resolves his dilemma, as best he can, by calling for "much more research to pin down the specific positions held by Communist Party members... in each particular committee." But this concession to scholarship does not satisfy the party patriot; despite the lack of research, the C.P.'s "vanguard" role has to be asserted:

Though much more research still needs to be carried out, it would seem that in very many of the Councils of Action which were most militant and most effective in their activity... Communists participated, often in leading positions (II, p. 149).

"Would seem"—"very many"—"often"—such woolliness demonstrates that Klugmann simply does not know the relative contributions made by members of various working-class parties to rank-and-file activity in the 1926 Strike. Where he is able to give statistics, the C.P. contribution is seen to have been somewhat less than superhuman. The Lanarkshire Council of Action had a communist chairman and seven other communists amongst its 40 members. In Battersea there were ten communists on a Council of Action of 124 and four on the executive of seven. In Stepney there were four communists on a Council of fifteen. And so forth. Klugmann estimates that over 1,000 communists were arrested during the strike; two in five of those arrested, in other words, were C.P. members.

It would be idle to deny that British communists worked very hard and made many

<sup>13</sup> Cf. II, pp. 190-1: "The tens of thousands of 'unknown soldiers' of the class war who... manned the pickets, led the Councils of Action, printed and distributed the bulletins, were members of the Labour Party, of the I.L.P., non-party trade unionists, as well as Communists." Pruning the Official History of such repetitions would, I estimate, have reduced its length by some 25 per cent.

<sup>14</sup> "Joseph Redman" (Brian Pearce), *Labour Review*, III (1958), pp. 11-12. I am indebted to this article for several of the quotations which follow.

<sup>15</sup> J. T. Murphy, *The Political Meaning of the Great Strike* (1926), p. 80. Harold J. Laski, *Communism* (1927), p. 195. Hamilton Fyfe, *Behind the Scenes of the Great Strike* (1926), pp. 68-9.

<sup>16</sup> As quoted by O. Piatnitsky, *Communist International*, IV (1927), p. 175.

sacrifices during the General Strike. But this is not the essential point Klugmann is making. He is seeking to show that the communists were, as a body, politically wiser than any other organisation. For his account to carry conviction, he has to omit the large amount of evidence that the party as a whole "failed to play the role in the General Strike which most people, friends and foes alike, had expected it would play."<sup>14</sup> The first detailed C.P. analysis of the strike, by J. T. Murphy (soon to be expelled), recognised that its start had caught the Party by surprise. According to Laski, writing a few months after the Strike, "the communists played practically no part at all." On the Strike's seventh day (10 May 1926), Hamilton Fyfe wrote in his diary: "The Communists have... kept very quiet... They have sunk out of sight."<sup>15</sup>

A few months after the Strike, E. H. Brown, a member of the Party Executive, admitted that "our factory groups were weak and did not function properly during the General Strike," while "in some districts the groups stopped functioning altogether."<sup>16</sup> George Hardy, another leading communist, declares in his memoirs that "the Councils of Action, with a few exceptions, functioned only in a limited way." P. Braun, a Comintern functionary, ad-

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mitted that the party had not believed in the possibility of the General Council's calling off the struggle; the party, he added, "did not do all it should have done to warn the workers against betrayal and to make betrayal impossible." And Murphy wrote in 1934 that the party "tried unavailingly to stem the return to work," but "held no decisive positions" which would have made that possible.<sup>17</sup>

All this Klugmann ignores, for he is interested in perpetuating a legend, not in establishing the facts.

BY THE SLY IRONY of history, Klugmann's first volume appeared a few weeks after the British communists and their daily paper, greatly daring and not without anguish and internal opposition, broke with the Comintern tradition of unquestioning acceptance of every Soviet word, thought, and deed. The invasion of Czechoslovakia was too much for even them to stomach; and those members and ex-members who thirteen years ago were calling for a more independent stance have had the pleasure of seeing *Pravda's* London correspondent chiding the *Morning Star* for its pro-Czechoslovak coverage and its doubts about the impartiality of Soviet journalists (*The Times*, 17 Sept. 1968). The British Communist Party has evidently changed since 1956. It has changed still more since 1920.

What is left today of the revolutionary doctrine and revolutionary enthusiasm of those 3,000 or so members of the British Socialist Party, the Socialist Labour Party, and the other groups and grouplets that gathered under the Comintern banner? How much in its present-day language and activities would they recognise, those stalwarts, a third of them unemployed, who were prepared to work for their party for thirty bob a week, who took arrest and imprisonment in their stride, who regarded Lenin's Russia as a beacon of hope for suffering humanity? Precious little, is the answer. Of the "three fundamental principles" on which the groups amalgamated, one, the dictatorship of the proletariat, was long ago

silently omitted from the party programme. Another, "soviets" as organs of working-class struggle and power, was likewise repudiated long ago.<sup>18</sup> The third principle, affiliation to the Communist International, was formally abandoned in 1943, when the moribund Comintern apparatus was finally wound up. But only a political innocent would deny that the Comintern tradition of finding out what the Russian comrades wanted doing, doing it at the double, and standing to attention till the next order came, died hard at No. 16, King Street.

Now that this principle, too, has finally been abandoned, in practice as well as theory, it is difficult to see what role remains for the British Communist Party. No longer a revolutionary organisation, no longer the local apologist for the Socialist Sixth of the World, overtaken on the Left by youthful militancy, regarded by politically aware young people as a joke, unable to face its past record with any degree of honesty, dolefully contemplating a future in which it could easily follow the *I.L.P.* into oblivion—why on earth should it not wipe the slate clean by dissolving itself? This is the logic of its backing Czechoslovakia against the Soviet Union. Klugmann's book is clearly part of yet another effort to rally the ranks, furbish the party's image—primarily amongst its own members—and show how essential the *C.P.G.B.* was, is, and always will be.

FOR THE OFFICIAL HISTORIAN is not so much concerned with history as with current politics. His history is basically a running polemic against his party's present-day critics. His insistence that the party "was not in any sense a foreign creation" is the key phrase in his first two volumes. This is the thesis he sustains for over 700 pages; but he can sustain it only by telling half the story. It is true enough, so far as it goes, that the *C.P.G.B.* was home-grown, in the sense that it developed out of existing organisations in this country; but to state this without qualification is to sidestep the Comintern's derailing of a whole generation of revolutionary socialists in Britain. So the Comintern is systematically played down. We are given *Hamlet* without the King and Queen and Prince.

Thanks to the Comintern, international solidarity was twisted into bureaucratic docility; revolutionary zeal was transformed into a sort of Left-wing Blimpishness; and Marxism was reduced to a set of formulas learnt by rote. This process began in the period Klugmann covers, and it is his aim to conceal its beginnings from his readers. That he fails, despite all the omissions and evasions, is the sole redeeming feature of these impudent volumes.

<sup>17</sup> George Hardy, *Those Stormy Years* (1956), p. 188. *Labour Monthly*, IX (1927), pp. 25–6. J. T. Murphy, *Preparing for Power* (1934), p. 235.

<sup>18</sup> In *The British Road to Socialism* (1951), a document which held it slanderous to suggest that the party aimed at setting up "soviets" in Britain. The party's 1935 programme had been entitled *For Soviet Britain!*, but this did not prevent Stalin's personally insisting—as I was informed in 1956 by a then member of the C.P.'s Political Committee—on the insertion of this oblique repudiation into the draft of the 1951 programme.

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## AUTHORS & CRITICS

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### On Hobbits & Intellectuals

By Donald Davie

"PAROCHIAL POLEMIC"—ENCOUNTER'S *R* and Mr. Kingsley Amis, snapping and snarling at each other in recent issues, agree in being deprecating about it. And they are so right. For this particular mixture of bitchiness and deprecation is a British hall mark; and it's this, the tone of their exchanges not the substance of them, which shows most clearly how it's all in the family, indeed only a quarrel at the parish-pump. They both "like it here"; and their liking it so well is what makes their disagreements only shadow-play, however much they huff and bitch at each other. Until Amis' anger or irritation gets to the point where he'll at least consider getting the hell out, no one can take his polemic against "the Lefties" much more seriously than *R* does, who thinks that liking it here is all you have to do to be a patriot.

I don't like it here, and yet consider myself for all that as good a patriot as *R* or Amis—perhaps a better. It may be that one way to stop being parochial about England is to start being egocentric about it. At any rate, it's worth a try—if one is a patriot, it is.

I qualify to join in because I detect in myself much the same drift to the Right that Amis admits to, and I don't apologise for it any more than he does. I am my own favourite author, and often when I seem to be studying another writer, it's myself I'm studying really. A poem of mine that has been puzzling me lately is one that I wrote in 1953, called "Creon's Mouse":

*Creon, I think, could never kill a mouse  
When once that dangerous girl was put away,  
Shut up unbridled in her rocky house,  
Colossal nerve, denied the light of day.*

*Now Europe's hero, the humaner King  
Who hates himself, is humanised by shame,  
Is he a curbed or a corroded spring?  
A will that's bent, or buckled? Tense, or tame?*

*If too much daring brought (he thought) the war,  
When that was over nothing else would serve  
But no one must be daring any more,  
A self-induced and stubborn loss of nerve...*

This poem was seriously meant, and much of it I still subscribe to. A loss of nerve is what has saved us time and again in the years since 1953. It was what averted world war over Budapest in 1956, as also this last summer over Prague, in which latest case it was in fact, and rightly, taken for granted. On the other side of the balance, an alarming recovery of nerve, "too much daring," was what took us into the Suez crisis and took America into Viet Nam. But I ask myself now, as apparently I didn't in 1953, "How much daring is too much?" What I didn't envisage then, which there is no excuse for not envisaging now, is that there would be people who would think it too daring of Creon to be a king at all, however self-limited and vowed to consultation and compromise. It is possible, I now realise, to think that it is audacious presumption for a man to get into any position of authority over his fellows, to take on any kind of institutionalised responsibility for directing them.

No one seriously believes this? On the contrary, John Rowley, writing to *The Listener* (24 October) about "End of the Anti-University," declared that that venture ran aground on precisely this rock. "But you need," said Mr. Rowley (expostulating, I take it, with his ex-colleagues),

a "place" and an "organisation" within it, however small and flexible, that is recognisable by all. Nobody seemed to be able to accept this. It meant an organisation and that meant "power," which was anathema.

Even then, he said, the Anti-University might be saved if "some reluctant capitalist" would write a cheque; but this was impossible because "we are unable to tell him who to send it to." The difficulty, one would have thought, could have been foreseen. But apparently not. The Anti-University was full of Antigones, not a Creon among them; and no one would take, or could be given, the authority to receive a cheque on behalf of the rest. For that would have been to acknowledge that the Anti-University had been instituted and was therefore (insupportable word) an institution. When people behave like this, Creon's nerve has been buckled indeed.

I HAVE NEVER HAD enough patience with Antigone, and Sophocles' play has never been in focus for me. This is where I go most strongly along with Kingsley Amis, despite differing from him violently about Viet Nam and the alleged monolith of Communism, and about much else. For what Amis calls "Lefties" I call Antigones. And the connection has occurred to

others; for instance, to Conor Cruise O'Brien, writing in the same issue of *The Listener* where John Rowley's letter appeared. O'Brien reminds us that Antigone had a sister, Ismene, who resented Creon's order but would not flout it:

There are many, even among the victims of the present conditions, who feel that the price of change would be too high: the spiritual children of Ismene are more numerous than those of Antigone, in Ulster as elsewhere. And their arguments, as always, are reasonable. The disabilities of Catholics in Northern Ireland are real, but not overwhelmingly oppressive: is their removal really worth attaining at the risk of precipitating riots, explosions, pogroms, murder? Thus Ismene. But Antigone will not heed such calculations: she is an ethical and religious force, an uncompromising element in our being, as dangerous in her way as Creon, whom she perpetually challenges and provokes.

I've always been pro-Ismene myself, ever since I first read the play. Amis, I think, isn't; he's a Creon man. I've always thought Ismene had more reason to lose patience with Antigone than ever Creon had, though neither Sophocles nor his commentators seem to have thought so. Creon and Antigone understand each other pretty well, they have a good deal in common, more than either of them has with unheroic, painfully reasonable Ismene. So it's no surprise if Amis has played Antigone in his time. As he did, I think, in a poem of his called "Masters," which he must have written about the same time as my "Creon's Mouse":

*That horse whose rider fears to jump will fall,  
Riflemen miss if orders sound unsure;  
They only are secure who seem secure;  
Who lose their voice, lose all.*

*Those whom heredity or guns have made  
Masters, must show it by a common speech;  
Expected words in the same tone from each  
Will always be obeyed.*

*Likewise with stance, with gestures, and with  
face;  
No more than mouth need move when words  
are said,  
No more than hand to strike, or point ahead;  
Like slaves, limbs learn their place.*

*In triumph as in mutiny unmoved,  
These make their public act their private good,  
Their words in lounge or courtroom understood,  
But themselves never loved.*

*The eyes that will not look, the twitching cheek,  
The hands that sketch what mouth would fear  
to own,  
These only make us known, and we are known  
Only as we are weak:*

*By yielding mastery the will is freed,  
For it is by surrender that we live,  
And we are taken if we wish to give,  
Are needed if we need.*

I think this is an enviably well-written poem until the last stanza where the cadence smooths itself out with disconcerting slickness. And not just the cadence, surely. For what follows if we take the argument seriously and try to follow it through? Surely one thing that might follow, one moral we might draw, is to act like Mr. Rowley's Anti-University colleagues. For if the only way to be known and loved is not to act or speak with authority, then shouldn't we at all costs refuse authority and neither sign nor receive cheques on anyone's behalf? Always be in the Opposition, never in the Government. Always refuse office. There is nothing else that Antigone can do, if she is going to remain Antigone.

The interesting thing about Amis' poem is that his Antigone refuses above all the supposed loneliness of office. In Sophocles' play Antigone is the intransigent individualist, a loner. But the Antigones that tangle with the police on or off campus, or in the streets of Derry and London, are always in the plural, and think of themselves thus, as the speaker of "Masters" does. The price that our Antigones won't pay in order to take authority is the price of detachment from the collective. Of course, mass-action is the only weapon they have. But their slogans and rallying cries, and their cooler statements also, make it clear that for most of them identification with the mass isn't just a strategic necessity but an emotional need, as witness their remarkable jumpiness about allegations of a personality cult surrounding Tariq Ali or Daniel Cohn-Bendit or any other "leader." Sophocles' Antigone could not be a social democrat; our Antigones are.

O'BRIEN INSISTS THAT Creon and Antigone and Ismene are universal types, or at least that the Creon-stance, the Antigone-stance, the Ismene-stance are constants of political action, in any place at any time. Doubtless this is right. Nikita Creon loses his nerve in the Cuban missile crisis, as Uncle Sam Creon loses his nerve over Budapest in 1956, as alas he doesn't lose it over Viet Nam. But when we think that Russian Antigones are called Larisa Daniel and Pavel Litvinov, we are forced to remember how circumstances alter cases. There is nothing disingenuous nor hypocritical about admiring the Antigone-stance in certain situations and in certain societies, while deploring it in others. If Communism is not monolithic, neither is "protest." And, to take another instance, we've seen

how irrelevant Ismene's stance of pained reasonableness can be, in one state after another of emergent Africa. So the British Antigone can be seen and judged only if we separate her from Antigones elsewhere; she belongs and is to be understood only in the context of British society. Even R, who jeers that "the Lefty" is a phantom, "at work everywhere, like a Jew out of the Protocols of Zion," doesn't really think that Amis sees him anywhere but in Britain.

Amis describes "the Lefty" in one of his best poems, "After Goliath," which one can think of as "After Creon." David, having laid the giant out cold, exults briefly over Goliath's adherents:

*Aldermen, adjutants, aunts,  
Administrators of grants,  
Assurance-men, auctioneers,  
Advisers about carcass,*

--all Creon-types, of the sorts hilariously pilloried in *Lucky Jim* and *That Uncertain Feeling*. Lucky Dave then pauses:

*But such an auspicious debut  
Was a little too good to be true,  
Our victor sensed; the applause  
From those who supported his cause  
Sounded shrill and excessive now,  
And who were they, anyhow?  
Academics, actors who lecture,  
Apostles of architecture,  
Ancient-gods-of-the-abdomen men,  
Angst-pushers, adherents of Zen,  
Alastors, Austenites, A-test  
Abolishers—even the straightest  
Of issues looks pretty oblique  
When a movement turns into a clique,  
The conqueror mused, as he stopped  
By the sword his opponent had dropped:  
Trophy, or means of attack  
On the rapturous crowd at his back?...*

And in the years since, we have seen how Amis the giant-killer settled that last question: the weapon of his fame, wrenched from the giant Establishment, has been turned on those who most applauded that assault. A sword taken from Creon has been used against Antigone. And, allowing for the comic-dramatic convention of the poem (the catalogue gets more vehement and more random as David's exasperation mounts), it is plain who Amis' Antigone is: she is the British intelligentsia. If he calls her "Lefty," this is because the British intelligentsia has virtually no right wing at all, except for Amis himself and one or two others like Robert Conquest and Peregrine Worshtorne; the British intelligentsia is a left-wing intelligentsia. Any talk of the Labour Party or the Conservative Party only muddles the issue, and it is an issue too important to be muddled; nothing less than What is an intelligentsia?

or what has it come to be in British society? What are the social privileges and obligations of an intelligentsia, and are these the privileges it enjoys, and the obligations it honours, in Britain today?

BUT SOME PEOPLE think we haven't got an intelligentsia at all. In a B.B.C. broadcast Graham Hough was saying that England has never had an intelligentsia, and hasn't needed one, but that it needs one now. Reading this in the University of Essex, less than 50 miles from Hough's Cambridge, I couldn't believe my eyes. At Essex I had seen university teachers very ready, in Hough's words,

to abandon the status of Arnoldian defenders of culture, to accept the distortions and special pleadings...involved in any attempt to make the past genuinely available to the present.

But of course Graham Hough knew this as well as I knew it. His own anti-Americanism had been so insistent that, unless indeed it was obsessive, it must have represented in his case too a deliberate abandoning of the Arnoldian role. We already had in England a politically conscious intellectual class in principled opposition to the national society, and ready on that principle to purvey "distortions and special pleadings" to the nation's student youth. Hough knew this. By pretending not to know it, pretending that it hadn't happened yet though it should have, he was wanting to swing over to his side people like myself who still believed that indoctrination is one thing, education another.

Not only does Britain have, in this deplorable sense, an intelligentsia; it has had one for a long time, at least thirty years. All through that time, to be a British intellectual and yet not a socialist has meant swimming against the tide. All that's comparatively new about the 1960s is the election of an allegedly socialist government. But even if the Wilson administration had chalked up a better record than it has, the British intelligentsia would still have deserted it. For an intelligentsia, being by Hough's definition a perpetual opposition, cannot be other than irresponsible. Like Antigone, it cannot afford ever to be answerable for the consequences of the actions it has demanded. And so any socialist government in Britain, however effective and honourable it might be, will always be disowned by the socialist intelligentsia of Great Britain, which will always move to the Left so as to resume its oppositionist role.

Thus, one asks for an intelligentsia in Hough's sense only if one assumes that intellectuals have a right to be politically irrespon-

sible. As an intellectual myself I have never understood why any society should be expected to recognise that right, or be reproached for not conceding it. Czarist Russia, the society in which the concept of an intelligentsia was generated, never recognised nor conceded that right; nor did the Russian intelligentsia expect that it should.

THIS BRINGS ME TO Isaiah Berlin's argument that there isn't a British intelligentsia. When he says that Britain hasn't and cannot have an intelligentsia, what he means is that British intellectuals have not earned, and cannot claim, the right to that privileged irresponsibility which the Russian intelligentsia could justly claim, not from Czarist society but as it were before posterity. Graham Hough, perhaps chastened by this so as not to press the Russian analogy, held up instead the example of France, and urged British intellectuals "to accept their role, in fact, as Sartre has accepted it in his brilliant and polemical literary studies." That figures. When the militants of the University of Essex had pushed their *jusqu'aboutisme* to the point of denying a minority their right to hear an invited speaker speak on the subject of their choice, that eagle eye from its Paris eyrie saw clearly through the conflict of principles which enmeshed those of us on the spot; and Sartre sent a telegram of support to the militants. No doubt it is very insular of me to regard that as a quite scandalous symbol of the irresponsibility of an intelligentsia.

Anyhow, Britain surely has an intelligentsia, in the sense of a body of educated persons who demand and act upon the right to be politically irresponsible, Antigones whose "colossal nerve" becomes more impudent wherever Creon's nerve is first bent and then broken. I see in these people "the Lefty" as Amis defines him: "an intellectually disreputable and morally desensitised person."

How HAS IT COME ABOUT that British society not only tolerates such an intelligentsia (for that any democratic society has to do), but applauds it and is proud of it? No democratic society has yet found a way to restrict the influence that such people exert, and perhaps within a democracy no way can be found. But British society, so far from wishing to curtail the influence, encourages its intelligentsia and rewards it. In many areas of the national life it sometimes seems as if proven irresponsibility is the surest qualification for positions of respon-

sibility and influence. It's foolish to start gobbling and hectoring about conspiracies and self-perpetuating cliques. The answer must be looked for somewhere else. I'd put it that the Antigones are so powerful in Britain because there are virtually no Creons left, and precious few Ismenes. Amis' Lefty gets his own way so often because he has us half-converted before he starts. Those who should play Creon's role, or Ismene's, and conceive themselves to be doing so, believe in their hearts that Antigone is right. Lefty turns out to have involuntary sleep-walking allies in the most unlikely places. The poet who wrote "Masters" was such an involuntary accomplice, so I have suggested; and the poet who wrote "Creon's Mouse" was another. Yet another is the author of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. And he is a specially instructive case.

FOR ALL I KNOW, J. R. R. Tolkien may be a Labour voter. On the face of it, nothing seems much less likely. A Roman Catholic born in South Africa who has spent nearly all his professional life as fellow of an Oxford college, specialising in Old English—nothing could be much further from the Lefty stereotype, or from the type of the British intelligentsia as I have tried to define it. (For to be a scholar does not automatically put you in the intelligentsia, nor does being a poet, a sculptor or a painter put you there—but that's another argument.) Yet I read *The Lord of the Rings* as a parable of authority, a parable pointing in one direction—towards the conviction that authority in public matters, because it is always spiritually perilous to the person it is vested in, can be and ought to be resisted and refused by anyone who wants to live humanely. And this is the conviction that the Anti-University was based on; it is Antigone's conviction.

*The Lord of the Rings* is one of the most surprising products of British literature since 1945, and one of the most serious. Edmund Wilson's attack on the book,<sup>1</sup> though it hearteningly insisted on the obvious—for instance, that Tolkien's prose is as undistinguished as his verse (someone ought to point out, for example, how much mileage he gets out of the one word "great")—quite fails to account for the seriousness of the undertaking, for the pressure that drove the author through these thousand or more pages, as it has driven many readers (this reader among them) to follow through the same pages eagerly. The avidity with which *The Lord of the Rings* is read, the appeal of it and the loyalty it evokes among admirers—these are self-evident facts which can't be explained convincingly by talk of

<sup>1</sup> "Oo, those Awful Orcs!" (1956), reprinted in *The Bit Between my Teeth* (1965).



frivolity and escapism. The fantasy which the narrative promotes and exploits and nourishes has to be something which answers to a specific need. And as to this, Edmund Wilson has nothing to say.

At first sight there seems an obvious solution: the book answers to a hunger for the heroic. And to some degree this must be true; *The Lord of the Rings* is a grown-up's *Superman*. But the driving force of the book is unheroic, even anti-heroic. The logic of the plot (which is very logical and tidy, not at all like medieval romance) is quite unequivocal; heroes are not to be trusted, only anti-heroes. The heroes have the style of authority. They are always looking "stern" or "grave." And so Tolkien's narrative seems to contain many portentous images of civic authority taken and exercised—for instance, by Gandalf the wizard, and Aragorn the lost King who comes into his own. But though these heroes have the style of authority, they never have the fact of power. Tolkien asks us to admire them precisely because, when they are offered power, Gandalf and Aragorn refuse it. The villains are those, like another wizard, Saruman, who when they see a chance of power to back their authority, attempt to take it. And the contrast between Gandalf and Saruman is particularly interesting, because in the world that Tolkien has made the wizards are intellectuals. They are superhuman, however; and so, really, is Aragorn. He is called a Man, but he is of superhuman mould, with an "elvish" admixture, and he lives much longer than normal men. Indeed the point of leverage for the whole of Tolkien's creation is an assumption the sourness of which is surprisingly little noticed, still less resented—the assumption that the hobbits, who are less than human, are the only beings in Tolkien's world that a human reader can, as we say, "identify with." We are forced to go along with this assumption because of the language that is put in the mouths of the hobbits, as contrasted with the more elevated and literary language that is spoken by everyone else. Though the language that the hobbits speak is not convincingly the language which the common Englishman does use (and sometimes, as in the case of the loyal servitor, Samwise, is quite embarrassingly wide of that mark), it is plainly meant to be so, and we register it as at least nearer to live spoken English than the archaic and rhetorical language given to all others.

WHAT THE NARRATIVE SAYS is that neither Gandalf nor Aragorn can be trusted with the power

of the magical Ring—a power which on the contrary can be entrusted safely only to the hobbit, Frodo. The idealistic and devotedly heroic capacities of men cannot be trusted with power; power can safely be invested (and even so not with complete safety, for even Frodo is tempted and falls right at the end) only in those "halfling" men who, lost in a sleep of modestly sensual gratification, can rise to idealism only reluctantly and mistrustfully under the pressure of outrageous events, who behave heroically as it were in spite of themselves and to their own surprise, without premeditation. Thus the whole vast work tends to one end—to the elevation of the common man, of the private soldier over his officers and the schoolboy over his schoolmasters, of the sensual man over the intellectual, and of the spiritually lazy man over the spiritually exacting and ambitious. This is "the Dunkirk spirit," or "Theirs not to reason why":

"Still we shall have to try," said Frodo. "It's no worse than I expected. I never hoped to get across. I can't see any hope of it now. But I've still got to do the best I can. . . ."

Although no hobbit can be imagined as fornicating, an American admirer of *The Lord of the Rings* got the message when he was moved to "memories of War, when unlettered, fornicating, foul-mouthed Tommies were heroes, pure and simple, on occasion. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

When a narrative calls up images so charged with sentiment as the fornicating Tommy and the Dunkirk beaches, anyone who carps at it has to be ready for trouble. So it's prudent to say that these images are charged for me too. A work of literature that calls them up, not explicitly but I think insistently, is Edwin Muir's poem, "The Combat," which in my opinion grasps more austere than Tolkien everything in Tolkien's vision that can be made true and moving.

AMIS' "MASTERS" is nearer to *The Lord of the Rings* than to "The Combat." All the same there are differences between Amis' concerns in his poem, and Tolkien's in his romance; differences that are important and also troublesome. They have to do with the difference between authority and power. Amis' poem is entirely concerned with authority, and in fact with the *style* of authority—with whatever it is in some sorts of behaviour that makes such behaviour authoritative. Tolkien is concerned with this, but he's also concerned with power. Gandalf and Aragorn have authority without power; and this, it seems, is all right. Frodo the hobbit has power without authority; and this is all right too. What is not all right, in Tolkien's scheme

<sup>2</sup> William Ready, *The Tolkien Relation* (Chicago, 1968), p. 88.



of things, is to be like Saruman the wicked wizard who wants power *and* authority, both at the same time, the one to back the other. Creon and even Ismene would find this hard to understand. And so do I. Power without authority is unauthorised power is the power of the gangster. Authority without power is impotent authority, the authority of the figure-head, the merely nominal head of state. But that is not the worst of it. If, as Amis does explicitly and Tolkien by implication, you identify authority with *style* ("They only are secure who seem secure"), then power without authority means power where we least expect it, power that is exerted upon us without manifesting itself: the power, for instance, of the advertiser and the media-manipulator—power which is all the more dangerous for not having any of the external marks by which we might recognise it, a power which operates under wraps or under the mask of the entertainer and the discreet or fawning servant. And authority without power, when authority is identified with style, becomes the magnetic or hypnotic authority of the great performer and the charismatic leader, the authority of a Hitler, whose authority *is* his power, and a very great power indeed. This authority is personal; it is conceded, and the power of it is exerted, in every classroom of any Anti-University.

"Your personal authority as a good teacher is unalienable; why do you need to have it registered in a title like Professor, and in privileges that go with that title?"

This is what campus rebels have said to me, speaking in the very accent of Antigone, and of J. R. R. Tolkien too. They do not understand me, or they do not believe me, if I reply: "Because power that is authorised, and is seen to be authorised, is the only sort of power that can be controlled and allowed for and if necessary guarded against—by the man who wields it, but also and more urgently by those he wields it over, who may suffer by it."

TOLKIEN, it is well known, is far more popular with American youth than with British; and among radicals and dissidents as much as with the squares. The manager of the Berkeley campus bookstore told the *New York Times* (15 January 1967), "This is more than a campus craze. It's like a drug dream." A vision so British as *The Lord of the Rings* cannot help but be distorted in the enthusiastic imagination of an American sophomore; and so one is sympathetic as well as amused, reading of Tolkien's distaste for things like the campaign buttons reading, "SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL HOBBIT," or "Go, Go, GANDALF." All the

same, an editor for the American publishers of Tolkien in paperback was obviously in the right when he told the *New York Times*, "Young people today are interested in power and they are interested in working out the conflict of good and evil. Here it is worked out for them." It is indeed; perhaps perversely, but certainly with impressive consistency. Antigone is right to be grateful. And although American campus rebels are very different from the British rebels, it's reasonable to think that when they cry "Pigs!" at the representatives of authority on and off campus they, like their British counterparts, are conceiving of a society from which authority shall seem to have vanished, where at any given moment overt authority shall be vested in no one at all. *The Lord of the Rings* endorses such hopes, and feeds them.

William Ready, who wrote *The Tolkien Relation*, speaks for a quite different section of Tolkien's American public. He is irritated and embarrassed by "the children and those who cherish simplicity, the wooden-beads-and-sandals set, in whom he has aroused enthusiasm..." And he admits, in some bewilderment, "This is a surprising cult, this campus trend, because Tolkien is all conservative, traditional and rigid..." But, of course, no British reader need be bewildered. The Dunkirk spirit brings a lump to a Tory throat as soon as a cheer from a Labour conference; Antigone is as ready to sprinkle regretful dust on the graves of our war dead, as Creon is to deliver an oration over them. And British society, in entrusting itself ever since 1939 to the principle of "a lot of weak government," has come perhaps as near as any society can to making itself into a society from which overt authority shall be absent; that is to say, just the sort of society which *The Lord of the Rings* incites us to realise.

For in practice a social organisation based on the conviction that no man can be trusted with authority has to take the form of government by committee; and thus *The Lord of the Rings* can figure as an elaborate apology for the rule by bureaucracy which Britain has invited and endured for the last 30 years, under coalition and Conservative governments as well as under Labour. The committees have the authority. As for the power, that is with the advertisers and the commentators and the trend-setters, with the Touch-Paceys in N.W.1, and with those members of committees—ministers, professors of economics, vice-chancellors, trade union leaders, others—who hurry from the committee-rooms to the T.V. studios.

They are all Antigones really. Creon's is such a thankless role in modern Britain that there is no one left to play it with conviction.

# Demi-Monde

By Richard Mayne

"**T**HEENAGE COUPLE IN CLIMBING DRAMA  
A student mountaineer was admitted to Dame Dob Hospital tonight with a fractured skull following a fall in which his unmarried girl companion escaped unhurt."

This is how the British or American press might conceivably report the case of Jack and Jill. A French newspaper would do it differently:

LES PÉRILS DE L'ALPINISME D'AMATEUR: *Une quête d'eau qui tourna mal. La chronique des faits divers rapporte chaque été le triste bilan de l'imprudence des jeunes qui s'aventurent sur mer ou à la montagne sans avoir pris les précautions minimales qu'exige la pratique en sûreté de n'importe quel sport...*

It's another world—more leisurely, more literary, less sensational, more moralistic. Can it be transposed to our own?

For some months now, *Le Monde* has been trying the experiment. Alongside its daily editions and the monthly *Monde Diplomatique* and *Monde des Philatélistes*, the paper has long published a weekly *Sélection* in French, chiefly for overseas readers; and since 23 April 1969, it's begun to put out a similar but not identical *Selection* in English. It appears every Wednesday at two shillings or fifty U.S. cents an issue; the subscription rate in Britain is £5 a year, or \$17.50 by airmail to the United States. (The daily French edition, for comparison, costs 1s. 3d. in Britain and fifty cents in the United States; a year's subscription by surface mail costs about £15 or \$36.) *Mutatis mutandis*, is the new venture worth while?

In format, *Le Monde's Weekly Selection* resembles its parent—what its director Hubert Beuve-Méry once called "a small dull newspaper." On a page 18" x 12" it carries six closely printed columns, with no pictures except in the advertisements and in occasional

literary articles. It shares with the American and the rest of the French press the habit of continuing front-page stories somewhere inside the paper; and its generally grey appearance is emphasised, in the English edition, by the pale grey oblong behind its title-piece. At present, it has eight pages, including one on economic affairs, one on literature, and one on arts and entertainments; one-third of the back page is usually devoted to a colour report in "Letter from..." style. The rest of the paper covers the week's news, with a leaning towards foreign affairs; there's usually a full-page report on some topical location, and a box of two half-columns summarising the news in France.

Beuve-Méry had contemplated publishing an English edition for several years; and he made practical preparations well in advance, appointing a small British and American editorial staff, which in turn recruited some forty or so part-time translators.<sup>1</sup> An initial dummy number appeared at the beginning of May 1968, carrying front-page news of student demonstrations; it was followed by at least four others before the new publication was officially launched. Even so, the first few numbers were an anthology of eccentricities:

... it is not true, however, that "the nation's destiny" rides in the balance... one of the régime's better-known personalities... the crisis of last May gave evidence of... neither is it known whether these movements will designate a common candidate. . .

Although few were ungrammatical, most smacked of *franglais*. Odder still were some of the headlines:

... MR. JENKINS KEEPS THE VOTERS IN MIND...  
TORNADO WELDS NATIONAL UNITY... BELGIUM IN  
THE THROES OF REGIONALIST FEVER... SWEDEN  
MAY NOT REACH ITS ECONOMIC GOALS THIS YEAR...  
DR. ZINSOU ADMINISTERS TO CHRONICALLY SICK  
DAHOMY... THE NAGGING EVIL OF BANDITRY...  
ITCH FOR RENEWAL AND THE VOID...

Headlines, of course, is odd in any language. What makes the English *Monde's* specimens so striking is that they work on the opposite principle to that of the British and American press. Here, brevity is all: Ministers don't resign, but "QUIT"; judges don't censure, but "RAP"; no couple is ever married when they can be "WED"; costs are not reduced, but "CUT"—or, more often, "SOAR" instead of increasing. And so on and so forth—or, rather, &c. *Le Monde's* headlines, in the French style, are more like grammatical sentences; and since the English version uses the French paper's layout, the headline writer's problem often seems to be

<sup>1</sup> Myself sometimes included—which makes this an exercise in *mea culpa* as well as in *lèse-majesté*.

that of expanding his message to fill out his space. One fairly recent example—"EUROPE NEEDS A FRESH DOSE OF CONFIDENCE"—was flanked by another even better: "FRENCH BANK RATE RAISED TO PREVENT SUDDEN OUTFLOW BEFORE NEW RÉGIME CAN ACT." With headlines like that, who wants a story?

French journalists don't ask that question; but they certainly query the British and American practice of following an informative headline with a "lead" that also encapsulates the news. Why repeat oneself?—especially since repetition is frowned on in traditional French prose. It's easy to sympathise—provided one sees newspaper writing as a branch of literature; but readers of the English *Monde*, unused to French journalistic habits, may be puzzled by opening sentences that look like Example A (How NOT To Do It) from the WizBang Correspondence course in World Journalism, Lesson One, "The importance of the lead—hit 'em hard before they hit you!"

The dispute between the U.S. and the Peruvian governments is the central preoccupation in every Latin-American chancellery, and illustrates the deterioration that has taken place in relations between the two halves of the hemisphere.

WizBang version (Example B):

Tiny Peru caused a striped-pants sensation here today when she got tough with Uncle Sam.

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE, perhaps, to re-write *Le Monde* in accordance with British and American custom, using WizBang's Example C (The Quality Press):

The Colonel stroked his Don Ameche moustache and looked with liquid brown eyes across the plaza to where the Stars and Stripes of the U.S. Embassy fluttered in the thin Peruvian sunshine. "Sí, Señor, we are worried," he told me. "But we are Latins first, Americans second."

To be fair, some of the English *Monde*'s colour pieces read rather like that. But it's the universal voice of the journalist-as-novelist-*manqué*, and no rewriting is involved. Nor, I think, would a rewritten *Monde* preserve the paper's virtues. Its French staff writers watch the English translation "like hawks," in the words of its editor; they're rightly anxious to lose no nuance, to make no concession to what they'd regard as a jazzed-up, distorted presentation of their views.

I say "views" deliberately, since even the news stories in the parent paper are often partly think-pieces. More sophisticated—as well as more opinionated—than some of their foreign

colleagues, *Le Monde* staffers make no crude distinction between "fact" and "comment," realising that selection inevitably turns the former into the latter, and that in the attentive world of French politics, comment itself is also fact. In less responsible hands, the blurring of one into the other could lead to abuses. Sometimes it does, even in *Le Monde*: foreign correspondents, in particular, now and then present misleading pictures of, say, British coolness on the Common Market or American attitudes to Viet Nam. But for the most part *Le Monde*'s stories are written with great care, even tact; and although in English they may seem laboured or academic, there's a case for treating some complex items in just this cautious way.

Here is one example. In the third issue of the *Weekly Selection*, Jacques Isnard reported that the French Chief of Staff, General Fourquet, seemed to be questioning the established Gaullist doctrine of "defence against all points of the compass," as well as advocating something like the MacNamara (and Naro) strategy of "flexible response." By British or American newspaper canons, Isnard's lead was highly uninformative:

The Chief of Staff of the French Armed Forces, General Michel Fourquet, has just published a major article in the *Revue de la Défense Nationale*.

He went on:

Despite its deliberately austere and technical style, this article is bound to have wide repercussions, for it heralds a new orientation in French defence policy.

4½ column inches later, Isnard came to the "news"; and even then he expressed it with caution:

... General Fourquet speaks of the "flexible response" which might precede a "strategic strike" (otherwise called "total deterrent") against an aggressor. He speaks of "the enemy from the East" against whom French divisions would be engaged "in close cooperation" with their allies. It is clear that General Fourquet's ideas form the basis of a national defence policy which differs considerably from that in effect since 1959.

The remainder of the piece was a reasoned exposé both of the article it reported and of the military background. It was clear, logical, and subtle, lending just the right weight, and no more, to Fourquet's measured and uncombative rethinking of policy. To have presented the "news" more dramatically as a repudiation of previous orthodoxy would have distorted its nature; it might also have provoked the ortho-

dox reaction that Fourquet himself had sought to prevent. This seems to me an instance of responsible journalism, written for those who are willing to reflect, not merely react.

AT A TIME when television and radio are more and more assuming the role of newspapers, providing nuggets of "fact" as fast as the wire services can collect them, responsible interpretation such as *Le Monde* at its best supplies is becoming more and more necessary. "Insight" and its rivals perform a vital service. Only *Le Monde*, however, does this on a daily basis. Of course, it has its faults. Some of them are glaring, and they show up more sharply in the English version. It uses dead metaphors: "set the ship of state back on course"—"throw his hat into the ring"—"she rules her waitresses with a rod of iron." It relies too much on allusion: "General de Gaulle is not Caesar," wrote Beuve-Méry in the first English number. "It is a pity—for his sake and ours—that he is not Cincinnatus either." It can be duller than need be: "GERMANY REMAINS FOCAL POINT" and "OKINAWA—KEYSTONE OF THE PACIFIC"—two recent headlines—only recall Peter Sellers' travelogue, "Bal-ham, Gateway to the South." And of course it's Gallocentric; but *The Times*,

whether of London or New York, can hardly claim to be less focussed on the domestic scene, while *Le Monde's* foreign coverage—especially of Africa and Asia—has a depth that remains unique.

To read *Le Monde* daily is an enlightening exercise. To read it weekly, in English, gives a strange sense of dislocation at the point where two conceptions of journalism meet and often clash. But the strangeness is lessened if one thinks of it, not as a *demi-Monde*, a daily paper in little, but as a weekly magazine of news. At present, it's still too modest: maybe a different format, with more space, would make it seem less strange. As it is, one compares it with the parent daily, and it inevitably appears thin. But until there's a daily English equivalent, it remains a bargain; and looking back over my own collection, I'm surprised to find how much of it I still want to keep in the archives—however it handles Jacques and Gilles.

RICHARD MAYNE writes regularly from Paris for ENCOUNTER. Among his recent contributions are "Après Moi le Dauphin?" (June 1969), "Maigret and the Happening" (September 1968), and "Why French Students Rebel" (July 1968).

# Sunday Mirror National Exhibition Children's Art 1969

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## LETTERS

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### Conquest on the Moon

ROBERT CONQUEST sees in *2001* nothing but technological wonders for pseudo-intellectuals fixated at the *Boy's Own Paper* level [ENCOUNTER, June] A curious tendency in ENCOUNTER is the reluctance of its men of letters to concede coherent meaning to movies (*vide* Nicola Chiaromonte in January 1963, expertly rebutted by Francis Wyndham, and J. G. Weightman on everyone from Bergman to Levy and now Pasolini).

*2001* is a cry of despair. Man's ape ancestor had the hands and the strength but was too nerveless and therefore uninventive to survive. The black tablet (ambivalently suggesting Moses, Stonehenge, Calvinism, a headstone) endows him with intelligence, *i.e.* the idea of bone as tool for killing. As the enlightened ape ecstatically threshes skull with bone, we cut to a space craft which is, visually, a bone (and is structured like skull and spine throughout the film).

All the wonders of science (videophone to moon) are used to communicate empty feelings (the child's birthday message is as selfish as her father is nervelessly docile). In their desert, the apes starved; in their technological desert, these men sit and suck snacks. An astronaut runs in the exercise drum, making boxing gestures (recap the shuffling apes).

As man has cowed himself into an inefficient machine, the computer (HAL) is as human as they. His quiet, reasonable, coaxing, demasculinised voice is their ego-ideal. Calculating that he can fulfil the mission better than they, he decides to destroy them. But just as one of the apes had just enough courage to touch the tablet, so one of the men has just enough animal health left to remove the (tablet-shaped) cells of HAL's brain. HAL reacts like a man (fear, "I feel better now," madness). And HAL was ineligible for the next evolutionary stage prepared by the race of the tablets, provided man could think his way to Jupiter.

"Everything leads us to believe that there exists a certain point of the intelligence at which life and death, the real and the imaginary, the past and the future... cease to be perceived as opposites." (Breton)

"In" Jupiter the astronaut sees himself eat a last civilised meal (at the table), die (in the bed), and be transformed into an embryo as different from man as man from his ape-like ancestor.

Some sub-themes:

1. *Eyes.* The dull, sad apes' eyes; the too-bright glint in the leopard who terrorises them; HAL's red eye; the embryo's huge, disturbingly alert eyes.

2. *Civilisations.* The Blue Danube Waltz for the rotating spacecraft, as if the formal *joie-de-vivre* of the Austrian Empire were immolated in the machines (*we* don't dance, we watch free-fall on TV). The wine-glass spilled by the old aristocrat in the colonial Louis XVI room prepared for the astronaut (and evoking both French and American revolutions; the exhaustion of old orders).

3. *Evolution (progress)* isn't intrinsic to man, nor to nature; man's greatest indignity is his dependence on outside intervention. He comes from a stock deficient in life-force; the astronauts die in sarco-phagi, their death is shown as wave-patterns on graphs. There is no reason to suppose that the Star Babe will be more moral than man.

4. Much of the film's effect lies in its elaborate, slow physical empathy, conjoined with the architectural structuring of its visuals (planetary conjunctions, spacecraft shapes, wave-forms). It is a painterly-sculptural film.

Far from being vague and indefinite, its reflections on man's intelligence and life-force recall (but differ from) Thomas Hardy.

Why is the meaning not made so clear that even Robert Conquest can understand it? Three reasons: 1. Why isn't *The Waste Land* obvious? 2. Obviousness shortcircuits experience. 3. Filmgoers like riddles (cf. *Marienbad*, Robbe-Grillet, etc.).

That the film is meaningful to its generation may be confirmed by reference to Tom Nairn in *Oz* 13 and Clive James in *Cinema* 2, while Christopher Cornford's dithyramb in a recent *R.C.A. Newsletter* testifies to its visual sophistication and power.

RAYMOND DURGNAT

*St. Martin's School of Art  
London*

MR. DURGNAT's delightful parody of the sort of thing I was objecting to leaves little for me to add. But perhaps the hasty reader may miss some of his subtler touches, and I should like to draw attention to a few of these:

1. The use of a pretentious, but inadequately mastered, vocabulary to indicate the level of intellectual maturity which goes for this type of theorising. "Immolated" and "ambivalent" are particularly well-handled.

2. The choice, among the many equally specious possibilities obtainable by an arbitrary cypher, of an interpretation quite incompatible with our only evidence, the book of the film written by the co-author of the screenplay.

3. The pointing up of the silliness of the claim to a higher comprehension by the cunning misunderstanding of comparatively simple particular events. "In" Jupiter" is an especially thorough confusion, with no warrant in any sense whatever; and the "colonial Louis XVI room" (a style which, owing to the briefness of its duration—1774-6, has left few other traces) is identified in the book as no more than an "elegant, anonymous hotel suite." Its supposed inhabitant, the "old aristocrat," is a wonderful invention too.

Mr. Durnat's point that literary men like John Weightman, Nicola Chiaromonte and myself seldom fall for this silly-clever obfuscation is well taken, and much appreciated. Perhaps it is because we are more directly concerned with the whole question of meaning and communication, over all that rich territory between the obvious and the inane. But I suspect that, since similar stuff (if on a more sophisticated level) has appeared on the lunatic fringes of literary criticism for at least two generations, we are simply better trained in detecting it.

ROBERT CONQUEST

*London*

# The German Opposition to Hitler

*A Reply to Critics — By DAVID ASTOR*

SIR JOHN WHEELER-BENNETT is mistaken if he believes that he never thought the German opposition might take successful action against Hitler, once war had broken out. His official memorandum (dated 28 December 1939) speaks of "an ally within Germany itself... more numerous and powerful than may be supposed... [with] a common aim with the Democratic Powers in destroying the Nazi régime." He is also mistaken in suggesting that he always believed outside help unnecessary or undesirable. In the same document he says "these elements within Germany should be strengthened and encouraged" and speaks of the "essential preliminary assurance" that they needed from the Allies.

Sir John now says he doubts whether he was ever in a position significantly to influence British policy. Why, then, did he write his memorandum? He also asks what "convincing" firm evidence there is that the German opposition could have overthrown Hitler in war-time, even if granted Anglo-American support and encouragement. As he well knows, there could in the nature of things be no such evidence.

Another way of answering these two questions would be to say that the members of the German opposition would never have made any attempt to overthrow Hitler had they first asked themselves whether their own positions were sufficiently influential or had they required the guarantees of success that Sir John now implies he and the British Government were entitled to demand before taking the lesser risk of supporting them verbally and morally from the safety of London.

For the German opposition, the risks of their enterprise included the most protracted and painful deaths that could be devised. During those terrible hours, they may have asked themselves why nobody abroad had been willing to help them. As his chief reason, Sir John gives the view that it was essential that "Germany be defeated in the field and compelled to surrender unconditionally."

It can never be proved whether this official British belief greatly lengthened the war. The members of the German opposition thought it did and the survivors of their plot still think so. What is certain is that the numbers of innocent people of many nationalities killed in that final year of the war—in concentration camps, city centres, on battlefields—must be counted in millions. Can we today regard the doctrine of "Unconditional Surrender" as having justified the refusal to give any support to the attempt by the German opposition to overthrow Hitler, which might have prevented suffering so much?

MR. CHRISTOPHER SYKES, in dismissing my suggestion that he did not properly examine the British

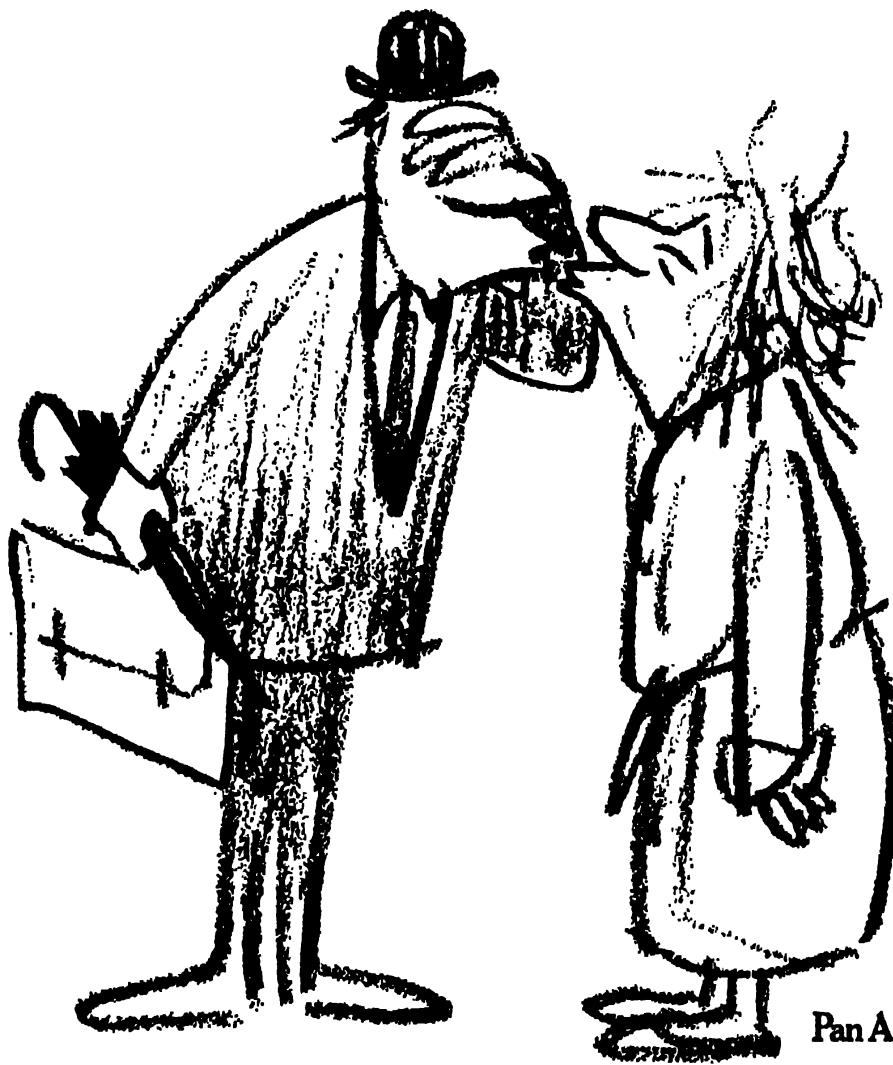
side of this story says: "No British official documents directly concerning the case of Trott have yet been published." In saying this he is, of course, overlooking John Wheeler-Bennett's memorandum from which I have already quoted. It is a document which Trott helped to compose and which represents one high-point of cooperation between a British official and a spokesman of the German opposition. Mr. Sykes was furnished with it. But, like Sir John, he evidently did not want to consider even the small degree of British responsibility typified by Sir John's failure to stand by a brave memorandum which he has since tried to forget. The same is true of the other British historians who have so far failed to notice this document and its implications.

SOME OF THE OTHER CORRESPONDENTS TO ENCOUNTER write as if they feel themselves in a position to criticise this or that member of the German opposition. Do they see themselves as greater potential heroes and more successful intriguers? I can only say that I would not myself have had the courage to join that opposition if, like Trott, I had had the chance to emigrate. Indeed, I urged him *not* to return to Germany. On the other hand, I am equally sure that, before war broke out, it did not take enormous intelligence or imagination to recognise him and the others like him as determined and trustworthy allies. Sir John Wheeler-Bennett and I were not alone in doing so. But there were few of us, and we did little.

If the Nazis were responsible for all that *they* did and their German opponents for all that *they* did and did not do, are not British people equally responsible for their acts and omissions? It is perfectly true that the public atmosphere in Britain in those times was not conducive to clear thinking. But the atmosphere in Nazi Germany was a great deal less so—which is why Sir John's condescending book about how the Germans failed to rid themselves unaided of Hitler (*Nemesis of Power*, 1953) is so embarrassing, particularly coming as it does from someone who has failed even to give a full account of his own part in the story.

The plainest example of the narrowness and inadequacy of this country's war-time attitude was our government's flat refusal in the summer of 1944 to promise even a temporary cessation of the bombing of Berlin (which could have had no military significance) when the German opposition asked for this minimal sign of approval to follow, if they managed to kill Hitler and break his government. There has been almost no British criticism of this attitude in the twenty-five years that have since passed.

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## *Wyndham Lewis*

An Anthology of his Prose

Edited with an introduction by E. W. F. Tomlin

'Lewis needs a book like this, a book of examples. His energy so complicated, his talents so diversified, it is almost inevitable that we've reached a point a mere decade after his death where much of his best work seems inaccessible . . . ' Robert Nye, *The Times*, 80s

**METHUEN**

*Nikola Šop*

## Cottages in Space

### I

Each one sways on the azure;  
They approach one another, then drift apart,  
Meeting at random, floating on the wind, knocking against each other.

When they touch, they rattle like shaken nut-shells,  
When windows come together, two neighbouring faces touch.

All is momentary, the kiss, the clasping of a loved hand;  
Then good-bye till they meet again  
After an age of moving in circles.

### II

Cottages in space, and windows  
With a breath-taking view into fathomless abysses.

Open your door, and from your threshold  
Descend to the next cottage,  
Swinging through space.

You'll leave no foot-prints, you'll find no traces.

Go, go,  
Draw nearer, stumble, totter:  
Fly to your neighbour's embrace.

In sheer delight you will toss each other up in the air.

### III

Settling down in space,  
All things are still on the move,  
Knocking against one another,  
Edge against edge.

Where shall we hang our favourite pictures from earth,  
Our souvenirs?  
There are no walls.

---

W. H. AUDEN *writes*: "Considered by many of his compatriots to be the best living Croatian poet, NIKOLA ŠOP was born at Jajce, Bosnia, in 1904. He was crippled for life during Hitler's bombardment of Belgrade in 1941. 'Cottages in Space' is taken from his volume *Space Poems* (1957)." Another long poem by Šop ("Space Visits"), also translated by Brusar and Auden, was published in the May 1965 ENCOUNTER.

Unlock your trunks with caution,  
Lift their lids very slowly,  
Or everything will fly away:  
Our little earthly things are out-of-date here.

Things of another substance are needed,  
With another point of balance,  
Weightless, unpossessive, in concord,  
Things that don't get lost.

#### IV

How delightful, this first feast,  
With objects settling down quietly,  
Getting used to a new order.

The guests, however, have not yet arrived.  
Have they lost their way in the new situation,  
Do their feet still slip, is their step still awkward,  
Does a level space still look to them like an abyss?

Peer through the window and listen,  
Listen for something that flies in circles.

#### V

All is in order, ready for the guests.

Slender threads tie the plates to the table  
And the food to the plates,  
To prevent them from flying away,  
Because, in the lightness, all things flutter,  
Are breezy, blue, like feathers.

But the expected guests; where have they got to?  
Where has their lightness carried them?

Round the table, attached to new spaces, arm-chairs  
Wait for the invited ones to hold on to them,  
Lest their lightness suddenly snatch them away.

#### VI

Everything hereabouts has lost its weight,  
So you must tie it down lest it fly away.

Every object is a winged bird:  
Let it flutter in its cage.

How wonderful it will be when, deeply moved,  
He raises his glass to propose a toast in the language,  
The voice we still remember so well.

He will weep, but the tears won't fall,  
Won't slide down his cheeks.  
Instead, shining and twinkling, they will remain  
A necklace of tears, afloat in the air,  
Strung on an invisible thread.

#### VII

I keep forgetting that all things are weightless.

I open windows and, suddenly,  
All my things fly out into space like birds,  
Out and away, and I fly after them.

We find it so hard to arrange the things in our rooms  
In the new weightless order.

How long will it take us to learn  
They are things of another substance, with another point of balance,  
Things in concord that won't get lost?

### VIII

Make no mistakes, my guests,  
Things no longer stand in their old relations,  
Ownership has become vague.

When you have learned the new point of balance, you will be light,  
You will sleep peacefully  
Over gulfs and abysses.  
A long life to you all, my first guests, in these new spaces,  
Remembering forever the old reality.

Gravity is deadly:  
It lowers things into human hands  
That make them their own.  
From gravity ownership was derived, the desire to possess was born.

But here things float, they belong to all;  
Each one seems everybody's, as it circles in an unbounded calm;  
It doesn't belong to a limited space,  
It detaches itself from an owner's catalogue.

### IX

Yes, it is from gravity that ownership was derived.  
Gravity bound things and tamed them: caged in,  
They served man gladly, liked to call themselves his,  
Wherever they were, inside the house or outside, or on the roof.

At night, exhausted by service,  
They fell asleep on their shadows:  
All their dreams were about smoke.

Oh, to be suddenly set free,  
To be with it, to be it,  
Detached, fluent, light, up there,  
Smoke.

### X

Meanwhile, my guests, you have gathered here,  
Swaying in concord, I see, with a new point of balance,  
Ready to clink glasses;  
None will get cracked or broken.

How jolly it is to see spilled wine  
Floating like a red cloud.

We marvel still at the phenomenon, forgetting  
That forces, unknown hitherto, are keeping it afloat.

## XI

Well, my guests, now we have clinked glasses.  
Good health to you all.  
But please stop talking. Silence, please.  
I hear something ticking somewhere.

In somebody's pocket, it seems, an earthly watch must be ticking.  
Somebody's hiding one,  
Somebody's measuring time after the out-of-date manner.     •

Whoever he be, what's the use of the gadget to him?

There's no more getting up or working by it,  
No more sleeping according to its whims;  
Not since we dropped anchor in space.

## XII

Let us consider this gadget.

A box into which, it is said, time pours,  
That records in advance hours and seconds  
On a small round face of glass.

But no: time does not necessarily move when the hands move:  
No, it's a spring inside that moves the hands.  
Time stops or rushes past the watch,  
Takes away, destroys, renews.

What's the use of a clapper striking,  
Or the cuckoo of an earthly cupboard-clock?

## XIII

In the cupboard all things have become transfigured.  
Nobody guesses that what we used to call worm-holes  
Are in fact the beds of new streams.

Inside a grinding goes on in secret,  
Not the dry exhalation from a time-worn interior,  
Like an old library, where on entering, we behold  
The crumbling effect of worms on old grey letters,  
And leaf through the past, hardly daring to breathe,  
Lest everything should crumble to dust.

## XIV

No, it's not the dry exhalation from a time-worn interior,  
But a transfiguration.

Filled to overflowing with new things that breathe,  
The old cupboard bursts open;  
At the pressure inside  
The key is ejected from the lock.

Inside the cupboard a clock  
Desperately cuckoos the old time,  
As new things fly out of it,  
Unfamiliar objects with enchanting edges.

The purpose of this, the name of that,  
Has still to be learned.

## XV

You'll have to stop each object and ask it its name,  
Hold it close to you and listen  
To its unfamiliar pulse,  
Or, perhaps, with a child's curiosity  
Turn it over, prise it open and peer inside  
To learn what its hidden secret is,  
What is inside, serving a new purpose,  
Shake the object to hear it tinkle.

## XVI

Look, my chance-come guests, what do I see?

One of you feels like sleeping here in the earthly manner;  
His head is nodding.  
He must be the one  
With an earthly watch concealed in his pocket.

Look at him! He's fast asleep:  
Some of his midnight hours must have struck for him.

Be quiet and listen. He is still talking nonsense. How strange!  
How did this late-comer ever reach these spaces?

On Phaeton's chariot, you whisper to me,  
You, the girl who sways on my right.

## XVII

Yes, that must be it. The uninvited guest arrived on Phaeton's chariot,  
Which he must have found in some corner,  
Shattered to be sure, but still winged.

On it he soared,  
Bringing all his old things with him, his earthly furniture,  
With those bygone weights of his, those shapes and possessions,  
He expects to sway, to balance.

Speak softly. Look, the sleeper is starting to sway: the new harmony  
Is gradually taking hold of him.

Hush, hush. In silence gather his things together.  
Load them on to the chariot and himself with them.

Send him toppling headlong to Earth, to Hades.

*translated by Branko Brusar & W. H. Auden*

## Where Did It All Go Wrong?

WHERE DID IT all go wrong? The Wanguished question punctuates history and ends all the great political dramas. It was asked by Alexander the Great's bewildered Hellenes as his Empire sank back into the sand on which it was erected. It was asked by weary veterans of the French Revolution as they straggled back from Waterloo and by Old Bolsheviks as they waited for the executioner to end their nightmares. So terminate all heroic political enterprises. Mud is constant, it seems, and shall endure; and the stars are for ever out of reach.

But something has gone wrong with the cause which appealed to so many refugees from *Sturm und Drang* just because it was so un-heroic. Democratic Socialism, as we disillusioned revolutionaries saw it, was a creed that was realistically based on the attainable hopes of men as they are, not men as they might forcibly be remoulded. It was cool. It was sane. It was about equality. It was about freedom. Its organisation, moreover, was intelligently constructed because nobody consciously constructed it. The intelligentsia provided an accelerator, the trade unions a brake, and millions of ordinary democrats the fuel. Democratic Socialism *could* be built and required no ruins on which it had to be built. What was best in the old order would be incorporated in the new. Slow growth from planned growth points was the thing. It might

strain the patience but would never torment the conscience.

Yet even now there is hardly enough electoral steam left in Democratic Socialism to keep Harold Wilson in the House of Commons, let alone put him back into Downing Street. There is more than the evidence of the pollsters to support this depressing conclusion. Every Labour M.P. knows what many are reluctant to admit—that his weekly surgeries are a surer guide to public feeling than his party management committee; and that the verdict of the surgeries is a thumbs-down to most of our cherished beliefs. The Labour Party may win the next election in much the same way, and for the same reasons, as the Democrats almost got their man back into the White House last November. But it will be no victory for Socialism, no matter how many bright young thinkers re-define the term and no matter how much meaning they drain from it in the process.

LABOUR M.P.s will hold their seats because they are identified with a union vote that has nowhere else to go, because they personify an ancestral hatred of "Them," because industrial workers do not like Quintin Hogg, because Edward Heath seems unlikely to set the Thames on fire and because the economy may be going up and taxes coming down.

In no constituency will a Labour M.P. win because the government nationalised steel, increased family allowances, built a good many schools and hospitals and presided over the restructuring of a lot of industry. Labour, I remind myself, won the 1966 election in spite of its plans, not because of them. The Prices and Incomes policy had not begun to bite. The high cost of giving the highest priority to the Balance of Payments had not appeared in four years' tax demands. What the voters wanted was business

RAYMOND FLETCHER has been the Labour Member of Parliament for Ilkeston in Derbyshire since 1964. He was born in 1921 and educated at University College, Nottingham. He is a former chief leader- and feature-writer on the left-wing weekly Tribune and is now a regular columnist for The Guardian. He published a study entitled *Sixty Pounds a Second on Defence* in 1963.

as usual with a change of management, no more.

Gone, in fact, is the delusion that we Socialists represent the "real" interests and aspirations of the People, and that the People themselves would see it if they were not blinkered by the "capitalist press." We have met the People in a series of disastrous by-elections. We have discovered that they too are pragmatists, who wonder what is in it for them *as individuals*. Their political behaviour, to borrow a scientific term, is going random. Areas that were once solid in their loyalties are melting at the edges.

Aspirations that once had to be expressed in social terms (that is, in the organised demand for more schools, more welfare, and more public control of other people's lucrative activities) are now personal or family ambitions (that is, an individual's desire for a good job, an enhanced status, a good education for young Johnny as a passport to a good job, and a bigger car to carry the family further). The Welfare State no longer generates enthusiasm among the workers for whom, and largely by whom it was created. Heated invective about state-subsidised layabouts is now heard as frequently in canteens as in the plushier restaurants; and, as every Labour M.P. was recently reminded, family allowances arouse as much resentment as the increased income tax that goes to pay for them.

THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES, in short, now begin to reject what Socialist mythology regards as the people's achievements. Socialists, therefore, are deprived of the one ideological crutch that helped some of us to hobble along one road while working-class voters were groping their way towards another. It was the belief, derived from Marx but not without influence on those of his readers who never got beyond his first footnote, that, in some transcendental way, we *are* the people, that *our* flag is the people's flag, and if democracy regularly gives the old heave-ho to the people's doctrine and the people's leaders, somebody—perhaps the Editor of *The Times* or the sub-editors on every other paper—is mucking about with democracy. Without crutches and without illusions Socialists must now face a chilly reality.

REALITY IS that though we may be wanted by our constituents, our doctrines are not. It is that most workers were doing very nicely, thank you, during the thirteen wasted years and

do not think they are doing so well now. It is that Barbara Castle's Prices and Incomes policy, though hardly different from the "planned increase of incomes" that the 1963 Labour Party conference accepted with exhilaration, was killed by proletarian derision just as her innocuous Industrial Relations Bill was killed by proletarian resentment. It is that the class-consciousness generated in industrial disputes drives workers against "their" party instead of towards it. It is that dynamic words from dynamic "new men" have not conjured up much new economic growth. It is that the planned solution to the balance of payments problem did not solve it, whereas the un-planned back-tracking to financial orthodoxy looks like doing so. It is, most of all, that Capitalism works and most people are quite content to let it.

Capitalism, of course, is not a dirty word, though by Sunday-sermon standards it is a dirty system. Measured by the Marxist yardstick, however, which registered such things as production and distribution, capitalism in this part of the 20th century has taught itself how to deliver the goods. The famous contradictions are still there, true. There is poverty in the midst of plenty. There is class conflict. There are currency crises. And those who claw their way to its commanding heights are frequently as undesirable as some of those who are elected to political office.

The contradictions, however, can be lived with or manœuvred out of. The post-war revolution in agricultural productivity, for example, should have shattered the agricultural price system in Europe as it did in the pre-1914 United States. It didn't. The downward curve of the trade cycle that most of Europe ran into three years ago should have been a run into ruin. It wasn't. Why and how capitalism got through its little local difficulties is no concern of mine in this article, though I think I know. What does concern me, and should concern every Socialist, is that our main indictment against the System has been thrown out by the highest court we recognise—that of the People themselves, expressing their political will in the ballot box and their economic will over the counters.

We always said that capitalism neither worked nor could be made to work. We argued that the glaring injustices that affronted our consciences were not the "real" diseases but were merely symptoms of the social disease, *i.e.*, the private ownership of socially-created property. And we were wrong. It is no use changing the



argument and talking of the lousy films they make in capitalist Germany, or the watering of French wines, or the tail-fins of American automobiles. We were just wrong about the potential of the system.

BACK IN THE DAYS when I regularly defended Holy Writ against such ideological back-sliders as John Strachey, Douglas Jay, and Anthony Crosland there was at least one intellectual mud-hole into which I never stumbled. I never thought that by changing a description one could change a thing. When Eisenhower's word-merchants described a recession as a "rolling readjustment" I preferred to call it a slump. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was, to me, a military alliance which I compared to a public convenience (*i.e.*, a necessary refuge, not a permanent home) and certainly not a "New Europe." It was the best of the good writing habits I acquired on *Tribune* and I have no intention of dropping it now. Capitalism, in my book, remains capitalism, no matter how it shores itself up with Committees and Commissions.

Both Strachey and Crosland took a different view in the good old days when Right was wrong and Left was right, and God help anybody who got caught in the crossfire. They tried to devise a new terminology to fit what seemed to be emerging in the 1950s—a social system that was neither capitalism nor socialism nor even an unstable amalgam of the two. Theirs was not an entirely wasted effort. The more reasonable inmates of the New Left use John Strachey's "last-stage capitalism" as a useful theoretical tool; and I myself have learned something from Crosland since I stopped hating his political guts. But the new terminology did not create a new reality. It merely persuaded some political commentators that the young men who talked Croslandese must have discovered the secret of political dynamism that had eluded the Old Gang in the Labour Party.

But the old hands in business were not taken in. They knew that they were in no danger of being taken over. Rejuvenated capitalism was created in the image of General Motors and not by the Fabian Society. Giant corporations certainly make the most of subventions (open or concealed) from the State and jack up their profits into super-profits in markets either provided, or greatly influenced by, the State. But what is new in that? There is nothing in the

recent history of the American aircraft corporations that was not, so to speak, dress-rehearsed in the days of the emergent American Railway companies. Yet I cannot say, as the unreconstructed Socialist in me itches to say, that the founders of Union Pacific wrote the scripts for today's board meetings of Lockheed. What has to be said is that public funds do not change the character of the corporations that receive them. Capitalists who sell aircraft to governments are no different from capitalists selling *Snibbo* to housewives. And it is because they and their system are doing well that Socialism is doing badly.

There are, of course, other explanations in circulation, all well studded with statistics and well ballasted with footnotes. But when you carve through the academic fat into the political meat of such offerings it usually proves indigestible. Like most members of the Labour Party I sometimes want to punch Harold Wilson on the nose; but I am not prepared to believe, even in transports of irritation, that what went wrong with Socialism bears his name. It is highly unlikely that the Church will canonise him, strong as he is for family allowances. But I cannot believe, as Paul Foot would have me believe, that the Prime Minister was bent on betrayal from the moment he had that picture taken outside No. 10 Downing Street.

THE WORD "BETRAYAL" is the one permanent resident in the ever-changing vocabulary of the Left. When I set out to guide the workers of South Wales towards the Marxist light twenty years ago, as stupid an endeavour as any guilt-ridden young fool ever embarked upon, I was constantly in the company of older militants who were expert anatomists of betrayal. Whenever a colleague got himself elected to the council there were dark mutterings about his "selling-out" in the working men's clubs. Attlee and his government were quite unmentionable and rarely mentioned. They had, in the opinion of my militant mentors, nothing to do with either Socialism or the working class. It was much later that I began to ask myself what kind of a movement it was that was always led by traitors. And what kind of working class was it that tamely allowed its unions to be staffed by sold-out bureaucrats, its cooperatives to be run by clapped-out non-entities, and the parliamentary seats at its disposal awarded as retirement presents to worn-out trade union officials?

I ask the question still. What kind of a Parliamentary Labour Party is it that accepts a leader one minute because there is, as the saying in the lobbies goes, "no alternative," and then angrily repudiates everything he says and does the next? It becomes all the more bewildering when the current leader is measured against standards set during the Attlee years—when the Left were saying the same things about him as they now say about Wilson. This is not to say that the Left (or rather the *Tribune* group which has squatters' rights in the area) is always wrong. Far from it. I think that James Dickens would have advised the Chancellor far better than the Treasury during the run-down to devaluation, and that his policies might well have removed the balance of payments problem from the political agenda far earlier, with healthy results all round. (It is, after all, a bit thick when a crusading movement turns itself into a mere committee for Saving the Pound.) But a change of leader or of style in leadership will not change the opinion of Mr. Henry Dubb, the *Ur*-Labour voter, that his taxes are too high and his wages too low.

The "betrayal" thesis is, in fact, a boomerang. Instead of concentrating the indictment against Harold Wilson it actually broadens it to include the party he leads in Parliament and the delegates who regularly give him standing ovations at conferences. If he is a "super con-man," then we, who have all been conned at one time or another, are simply a pack of gullible fools. I cannot accept this. If Harold Wilson has abandoned most of the ideas he took with him into Downing Street in 1964 it is more logical than charitable to assume that some of them just wouldn't work.

Every big idea with a big head of emotional steam behind it must occasionally be tested to destruction, just like prototype aircraft. To save Socialism, in fact, it is necessary to try to destroy it, at least in print. The first stage of the exercise is undoubtedly painful, as my own headaches testify. Intellectuals, moreover, find it easier than other people to be dishonest. Only the Webbs, the most brilliant fools in the England of their day, could have hailed Stalin's Russia as "a new civilisation." They meant well, and as far as this country is concerned they did well; but Mr. Henry Dubb, despite the limited intellectual tools he had, saw through Stalin long before Left intellectuals got round to asking questions about the Moscow trials.

I AM NO LONGER ABLE to disguise the fact that I am an intellectual who has talked and written his share of nonsense, though most of it was good readable Trotskyist nonsense and not a word of it the self-degrading rubbish that my intimate enemies wrote about Stalin. Some of today's intellectuals are a better breed, partly because many of them were born of workers and have lived as workers. Yet there is a milder strain of the virus of the 1930s still active. It has clearly infected many of the young Socialists who by-passed the old mythological constructions, who knew Stalin only as a dead dictator, and who came straight to Hugh Gaitskell and then to Parliament with very light ideological luggage.

This has not prevented them from clothing what is in the language of what ought to be. Their enthusiasm for the Common Market bears witness. The EEC has its bread-and-butter problems, but it works. Nobody writing from the heart of the German *Wirtschaftswunder*, after living and working in the Six for a couple of months (as I do and have done) can doubt either its success or its permanence. Those European Socialists who either serve on its Commission, or helped to wean it in committees, can be forgiven for thinking that the injections of Socialism that went into its bloodstream now nourish a set of potentially Socialist organs. Socialists in Britain have not the same excuse for making the same mistake. The Common Market is certainly not a capitalist conspiracy, but it *is* rejuvenated Euro-American capitalism, which has chosen the controlled multi-national corporation as its instrument for doing its business. It is also, as the realistic Professor Hallstein always insisted, as much of a State as Napoleon's Confederation of the Rhine or the pre-Bismarckian *Zollverein*. It cannot be transformed into the Socialist United States of Europe by adding a few Labour Ministers to its council.

The "Great Debate" in the Labour Party about British entry into the Common Market aroused slightly less interest in the country than a dropped catch at Lords. Yet it was a test-bed in which Democratic Socialism shook the rivets out of itself without knowing it. Some of the political eccentricities displayed can be understood and excused. Politicians whose following dwindles, like actors who play before a diminishing audience, tend to over-do it. Hence the bombastic claims that Britain would take the leadership of a Europe which, at that moment, was preparing to admit us only through the

tradesmen's entrance (*i.e.*, the offer of association) and eventually allowed the French to slam even that door in our faces. Hence the odd idea that the *élan* that was visibly lacking in this country would be pumped into us by our booming European partners, a notion rather similar to the cannibals' belief that you acquire a warrior's strength by nibbling a warrior's heart.

But the arguments for entry that carried most weight among the participating Socialists were those that shook Socialism itself virtually to pieces. There were better social services in the Common Market countries. There were higher wages, more influential trade unions, more successful cooperatives. And the Commission did allow you to plan if you wanted to, though there was to be no mucking about with the market.

Nobody asked why, if the Europeans had gained all these things *without* Socialism, they should need either it or us. As Lenin pointed out, people do not turn against an old social order because they want to but because they have to. They can be led to a new society only when it is impossible for them to live in the old. It was quite clear during our debates, and it has become clearer to me since, that Socialism as we understand it and cheer it at conferences is, to put it coldly, superfluous to European requirements. Anything public corporations can do, multi-national corporations can do as well or better at the moment. The steady advance of workers' living standards can be achieved by the workers' own organisations. The more successful those organisations are, the more prosperous and stable the whole economy becomes. Professor Karl Schiller, who took the helm of the German *Wirtschaftswunder* when Social Democrats entered the Coalition in 1966, steered it with his left hand down a bit and with a friendly eye on the unions, but he did not steer it towards anything we would describe as Socialism. He forfeits none of my admiration thereby. His charted course was not the best that German Socialists have dreamed, but the best they could do. And they, of course, have gained electoral support at the same rate as we have lost it.

**W**HAT, THEN, DO WE DO as we ruefully contemplate the wreckage in the test-bed? Run off madly in all directions like John Braine and end up spouting reds-under-the-bed nonsense at the Monday Club? Empty our bowels

over former comrades (and our former selves) like many ex-Communists and even some ex-Bevanites? Or slip quietly round the corner to Tothill Street and be received into the Confederation of British Industries as John Henry Newman was received into the Catholic Church?

No such theatrical leave-takings are necessary. There are things in Democratic Socialism that are not among those fractured structures lying in the test-bed. It will make argument easier if I personify one of them as Raymond Williams, another as Michael Foot and a third as Jack Jones. Each of these Socialists is a strong individualist and every one of them would run away like a racehorse from any school of thought that labelled itself with his name. But it is Williams who has mounted the most heavily-armed critique of the *individual* consumer-orientated society, Foot who most splendidly objects to anybody being pushed around for any purpose, private or public, and Jones who most vigorously reminds us of those deep, inarticulate needs of the industrial worker that even the best wage-packets do not satisfy, and who testifies that striking workers are usually trying to assert themselves as men in industries where they are still regarded as hands. The rejuvenation of capitalism may have demolished the pretensions of the Fabian planners and the abrasive social engineers: it has not filed down the cutting edge of the Williams-Foot-Jones indictment of modern society.

Nor has it robbed Literary Socialism (which I personify in Arnold Wesker, doubtless to his extreme annoyance) of any of its passion. The workers I represent in Parliament actually prefer chips with everything and it is my job to see that they get them. But Wesker desperately wants them to want more; and in Wesker's theatre I am cut down to six inches high for not persuading them to want more. This is a necessary therapy for everyone in public life. Even Bernard Shaw, who doubted whether the workers could govern themselves, maintained that all governments must govern in their interests. Literary Socialism, as an angle of vision or an organisation of generous feelings, has produced some of the best drama of our times, has pushed British television ahead of the rest (we see less rubbish on our screens than either Americans or other Europeans), and is now filling the German literary scene with vibrant life. Sometime, somewhere, some of Wesker's audiences will find some way of organising

themselves in accordance with the way he sees them. But not next week, nor even next year.

When I describe Wesker as Williams translated into theatre I offend both men. But I do not, I hope, distort the social-critical trends for which I use their names as short-hand symbols. Since I am writing this piece out of my own head as a deliberately unscholarly essay, I write only of what I have absorbed from my Socialist Trinity—and I may well have absorbed the wrong bits.

I am, moreover, concerned with diagnoses, not prescriptions. When Williams probes into our present discontents, as he did in his briefest and best essay ("Towards a Socialist Society" in the symposium, *Towards Socialism*), I cheer. When he suggests remedies, which usually turn out to be the usual rash of well-meaning committees, I groan. Similarly, it is the Wesker who writes plays, not the Wesker who struggles to get *Centre 42* off the drawing board, to whom I remain politically indebted. My own attitudes, such as they are in my present transitional mood, are not personified by any English writer or politician. It is rather Günter Grass who speaks for me when I cannot find the right words to speak for myself.

To Williams, as to A. J. P. Taylor, civilisation is what people do in public, as well as what people consciously do together in communities. The Nottingham Playhouse is civilisation and so are the Women's Institutes. The consumption of processed cheese, like the consumption of processed television serials, is not. And there are two clear and present dangers in a society where the individual consumer can regard himself as the king, dangers that are the maggots in a luscious apple. The first is that the consumer in us will fight the citizen in us and win. As consumers we are influenced in our choice by advertising men who have studied all our psychic quirks and shape their advertising campaigns accordingly. There is an association in our subconscious minds between speed, sports cars, and sexual virility. The petrol companies, therefore, film our submerged urges and link them visually with their petrol. I am not sufficiently disturbed by TV commercials to write to my M.P. about them, but the point is this: whereas art draws us out of our inadequate selves, advertising pushes us back in. We may grow fat as consumers; but we do not grow in any other sense.

As with petrol, so with politics. It is the consumer who is the target of political campaigning

today. It is the consumer who can be persuaded to buy political leaders whose thoughts are thought for them by experts in acceptability, whose speeches are written for them by erudite students of human weakness and whose personalities are fabricated for them by cameramen, directors, and make-up girls. The great virtue of democracy is that, in the end, the Big Lies are exposed and the Big Liars sacked. Democracy takes a beating when candidates and policies are sold like soap-flakes. Communities wither and die as we all become, and are governed as, manipulable consumers.

I know that there is always a healthy kick-back coming. Newton's Second Law of Motion—that action and reaction are equal and opposite—offers the only theoretical consolation to bewildered contemporary Socialists. But the kickback into more public spending to improve the quality of our public living may come too late. We may find ourselves, like the unfortunate citizens of New York, consuming like Croesus but afraid to go home in the dark.

This is the second of the dangers to which Williams draws attention. Where the market is the only important social process we are all commodities, and some commodities just do not get sold. They range from Strand cigarettes in Britain to unskilled Negro workers in Detroit. Yet don't we all have a chance to get on the market? Careers are now open to talent. Dustmen's sons can go to university and dustmen's daughters marry into executive suites. But what happens to those who cannot make it and who feel that the whole of organised society is not only pressing down on them but also looking down on them? What happens to a society whose *leitmotiv* is not so much keeping up with the Joneses as finding new ways of publicly despising the Joneses? Will the bottom people eventually strike at the top, blindly, viciously and destructively, as they do in Michael Young's disturbing book *The Rise of the Meritocracy*? And is this not the social disease of which the increase in violence is one of the indices? Strong communities might contain all this, as strong families gently discipline their idiots, but consumer society objects to paying the bill. So long as these questions are asked, Williams remains relevant.

FOOT WILL ALWAYS be relevant, even in Utopia. He will not have people pushed around, whether they are journalists who want to tell the truth or coal miners who want to work. As a re-

incarnated Hazlitt he is both a Socialist and an enemy of one aspect of Socialism. The bureaucrat, the man in Whitehall or in the Town Hall who knows best, thrives best in a planned economy; he is Foot's eternal foe. One kind of freedom, however, demands planning. It is the freedom to work and the freedom from being sentenced to unemployment by remote people for incomprehensible reasons. The social and technological change we all enthusiastically demand at Party conferences frequently arrives in the individual worker's home as disaster. It is the machine or the merger that is going to put him out of a job. Foot's Socialism is about liberty, about Cobbett, about the Englishman's right to tell his social superiors to go to hell and about spreading the good things of life around more fairly. But, in 1969, it is mostly about organising our social machinery in such a way that the metallic kind does not damage human dignity. We'll always need Foot, even though, from time to time, we have to jettison part of him to preserve the rest.

JONES is the Jack who knows he's as good as his master, if not a darned sight better. He has far more in common with the rebellious social frontiersmen who carved out an area for the growth of trade unions than the unimaginative Friendly Society types, all gold badges and good works, who actually presided over its growth and who were astonished to find at the turn of the century that they were supposed to be heading for a grand takeover of the means of production, distribution, and exchange. Others may chant Clause Four to scare away the Evil One: Jones believes it.

But he believes in it in his own way. His job is to sell labour at the highest price he can get and he is a very good bargainer. He knows far more of productivity bargaining than the politicians who make speeches about it. He has a ruthlessly practical attitude towards change, which he measures in the extra pennies an hour he can get out of it for his members. He was a thorn in the backside of the trade union establishment for years, yet he is so much a prototype trade unionist that it seems odd to meet him away from the negotiating table or out of the conference hall. His Socialism is a response to the limitations of collective bargaining. What he wants more of, for the workers he leads, is only partly to be measured in money.

It is easy to pare away the fungoid growth of mythology from British trade unionism and

find the same acquisitiveness underneath it that conference resolutions regularly denounce. It is even easier to sneer at the jargon-clogged channels through which the organised British worker's desire for more is expressed for him. But trade unionists are usually right about the great big issues—right, that is, when the individual trade unionist is multiplied by his organisations. The T.U.C. got to the causes and cure of the Great Depression of the 1930s at least four years before Keynes. It spat out the dictators when literary men were making pilgrimages either to Mussolini or Stalin. It organised itself for war, under Ernie Bevin, far more totally than Hitler's Labour Front. And it now says that economic expansion is necessary for it to speed up the job of reforming itself, and it is right again.

There is, in short, a vast, largely untapped reservoir of common sense and wisdom lying below executive levels in our society. Jones wants to tap it by enfranchising it. He wants what we achieved when we were at war—the camaraderie that dissolved a thousand industrial problems a day, the shared purpose, the shared commitment and the shared responsibility—to be achieved in peace. Maybe he wants too much. Maybe the exhilaration of war-imposed Socialism was as fleeting an experience as a sexual orgasm, and the norm is what we have slipped back to. But what he wants is no mean, degrading thing; and it is because I am still loyal to him that I do not indulge in the fashionable scribbler's habit of urinating upon trade unionism.

**B**UT JUST AS the dead don't vote, except in Northern Ireland, the future can't vote either. If Socialism does not mean anything to our Henry Dubb, who is beginning to think that he will not bother to vote at all next time, it does not mean anything at all. The Labour Party's task, however, is not to re-package its goods to suit what market-researchers say are Henry Dubb's tastes. Equally mistaken are the bewildered Labour M.P.s who talk incessantly of getting the message across, and look accusingly at me because my weekly newspaper column (in the *Guardian*) does not read like a party poster. If every editor of every newspaper published nothing but governmental glad tidings, Mr. Dubb would still feel inclined to sit out the coming election. For he does not think he *needs* us any more, neither Harold Wilson nor Williams, Foot and Jones. Democratic

Socialism has got to get itself needed before it breaks out of the encircling apathy. Even then there is one more river to cross. Political artistry is mostly persuading people to want what they need; and the Labour Party has always been short of political artists.

Much of the stock in Labour's present store is not likely to be needed in 1970. Not even Marks & Spencer's could sell the expanding social wage, expanding public ownership, and perpetual industrial re-structuring in the kind of political market I describe above. People no longer think they need further advances on these fronts. They are letting in retreat-bugling candidates at almost every by-election. Yet Labour can save itself, and keep Democratic Socialism in being (like one of Admiral Mahan's ideal fleets), but not by more policies. It is already over-loaded with policy and will just sink if it takes on any more. What it has to do first of all is, in Dr. Johnson's phrase, to clear its mind of cant.

This time the job must be done properly. The Labour Party must expose both itself and Democratic Socialism to the power of destructive thinking, even if it has to hire a few demolitionists like Peter Simple to help. (Such characters, in any case, would do far less harm than the specialists in being with-it who worked "soul" into the current slogans.) Such shock therapy might break a few hearts and disturb a few minds; but Socialists cannot carry on like Arab armies, shielding themselves from reality with quasi-populist rhetoric, treating every minor parliamentary skirmish as a battle and hailing every defeat as a victory.

An overload of cant disqualifies those who carry it from either thinking strategically or formulating a strategy. The Labour Party has to learn what Captain Basil Liddell Hart eventually succeeded in teaching the military—that frontal assaults usually fail and that the indirect approach is invariably the only one. In other words, you don't just charge into such mine-fields as industrial relations: you creep into them after very careful preparation, recognising with every cautious step you take that the fears you face (however irrationally based) are nine-tenths of the facts of the situation you are in.

Socialists may think that because Joshua took Jericho with trumpets other citadels will fall if they shout outside them loud enough. They won't. Just as war was not abolished by the dozen international conventions that outlawed it, and just might be by undramatic negotiators

who have the patience to argue for a year about the shape of the negotiating table, a Democratic Socialist society cannot be "built" by social engineers. It has to grow, and what eventually comes up may not even remotely resemble the picture on the seed packet.

The very term "Democratic Socialist society," indeed, is one to be dispensed with in thinking, though it will do for occasional conference speeches. It implies something totally completed and totally different from what we have now. But life does not permit either the completion or the destruction of any form of social organisation. British capitalism, for example, could not destroy feudalism: so it took over some feudal trappings and eventually invited barons into its boardrooms. Democratic Socialism will thus always be in a state of becoming. It will never dramatically arrive. And some instalments of it will be delivered by the most unlikely people, such as the State Governors in America who are now pushing Richard Nixon towards a Federal Social Insurance scheme. "Creeping Socialism," the American diehards call it. Uninspiring, no doubt. It still gives the Foot tradition some room in which to thrive.

BUT THERE ARE CYCLICAL MOVEMENTS in politics as there are in economies. People change. Public moods change. Social needs change. In advising retreat now, I do not by any means exclude the possibility of advancing later. By "retreat," of course, I mean a pulling back of the State from areas wherein it now interferes without controlling, I mean a decisive shift of resources from the social wage into the wage packet, and I mean a pruning of indiscriminate welfare provision. I regret all this as bitterly as Hannibal's troops must have regretted his decision to yield ground in the early stages of the Battle of Cannae. Yet Hannibal, as every schoolboy knows, was as clever as I want Labour leaders to be: he retreated in the centre in order to advance effectively on the flanks.

The future lines of advance for Socialists are, paradoxically enough, being mapped out in capitalist America. Sociologists, physicists, engineers and quite a few intellectuals, all rubbing their heads and their disciplines together in think-tanks, are studying the future. They are not dreamers. They are diagnosticians. And what they are diagnosing is a social disorder which Alvin Toffler, the fugelman of Futurism, has described as "Future-Shock."

Its symptoms are all around us. They are what

Williams, Foot and Jones, and many others who would not be found dead in the same polling booth, are keeping their eyes on and thinking about. The cause of these present discontents, Toffler argues, is that the future is arriving too fast in some areas (such as automated, fantastically productive, modern industry), and too slow in others (such as urban development, educational systems and the control of communications). Some men go to the moon: others can't get out of the ghettos. The American situation, in fact, can serve as a metaphor for the rest of the West, which steadily becomes what America already is. Planning a co-ordinated arrival of the future demands a massive intervention of public authority. This is the message that the computers are chattering out: Alvin Toffler has translated it into English and Robert Jungk into German. It is the foundation of a strategy, and it could be the beginning of a programme. It certainly provides a map of the area wherein Democratic Socialism can become needed again.

But the message must not be misunderstood. There is no political future in just burning incense to the Future. None of us likes change. Even I would resent and resist the automation of the House of Commons. People cling tenaciously to their islands of things-as-they-are.

It is to this innate conservatism, in fact, that Socialists must anchor themselves as the technologists pull us all into the future. It is not change that Socialists must shout about. It is the preservation of security amid the destructive

ravages of technology that they must quietly talk about. They must find the courage to be dull, as the successful Swedish Social Democrats have done. The Swedes are not Walter Cranc heroes, storming the reactionary heights. They run the most civilised society in Europe almost anonymously. We all know the names of Swedish film directors, but hands up anyone who can name the Swedish Minister of Health. People give their confidence to leaders who assure them, in deeds rather than words, that they are going to remain people and that they are important. Social reforming, in short, is best done by stealth, by shoring up communities as they are, at the same time as giving them almost imperceptible injections of change.

ALL THIS, I know, is short-hand. I have not attempted to write the next party manifesto, but merely suggested that the less manifesto the better. I am not in possession of the secret of governing, but I know (since my constituents tell me) that Labour has done too much of it and that the country is suffering from legislative indigestion. And after all this theorising I have come to roughly the same conclusion as my railwayman neighbour, who does no theorising at all. I fully intend to vote Labour next time. But, for heaven's sake, my leaders, be the pragmatists you say you are and go with the grain of the timber you are trying to re-shape.

Brian Aldiss

# Gunshot-Wounds of Wisdom

## Writer's Notebook in Rio

IT'S THE SENSE that the jungle's crawling into the city—back into the city, let's say! Look round at this room—bright, modern, full of all these smart clever people. Yet at back of all the intellectual conversation you can hear the vegetation growing and the bongo drums going.

I like that! The music fills me to my fingertips.

That's what you expect, isn't it?—Love affairs busting or lasting like empires?

Silver is the colour we usually call wings. You see them every day above us where I live.

Without wanting to go into it too technically, I'd say that for several thousands of years now, vocalisation of thought has been on the increase, and this is part of the pressure to which the human brain is now endlessly submitted. If it wasn't for the command centres of the human brain, we'd be mutating every hour on the hour!

Forget the state of your shirt and just look at the fantastic women coming in. The whores and queens of ancient Egypt, isn't it?

Brazil's the fourth biggest nation on earth. You have to take that into consideration.

It doesn't make much of an impression, does it?

Well, on me it does. The whole continent comes flooding through that window!

Eh, I lika your story so mooch—it gotta da beeg monster, eh?

That's what's so delightfully cockeyed about

the place. You come here and they make a Yugoslav girl Queen of the Festival!

I suppose one couldn't sleep with Neda Arneric?—I mean, even respectfully?

He's a very famous musician in Rio. He lives in a street named after him.

Oh, I tell you, I'm hot for melancholy, Henrietta!

No, the place alarms me and I'll be glad to go. Maybe I'll stay till Friday—there's a flight out *via* Bogota that would suit me. But look, we lie here on the beach—look down that end! That haze drifting in. It's not fumes from the automobiles, it's coming in off the sea. Doesn't it look like radioactivity? Remember those scenes in the movie of "On the Beach"? It's like that. Like doom!

I heard they weren't killing the interior tribes off. The tribes just sort of die off as they contact civilisation.

Did you say *contract* civilisation?

One Brazilian told me, "We're only doing to the Indians what you did to your Indians a century back."

Anyhow, they aren't so friendly. They're very treacherous. They have long loaves of bread, like the French, and present them to their enemies in the guise of friendship. But all the time they have long knives concealed in the bread, and then suddenly—wham!—they stab their enemy, bread and all. Isn't that terrifying!

You know a funny thing? Everytime it rains, we can get no water from the taps. It's special to Copacabana.



She was the most promising starlet from Fox ten years ago.

You can say that again.

You couldn't say it now.

I KNOW WHAT THEY CLAIM. But who's digging the roads? Who sells lemonade up and down the beach all day? The poor old black man's at the bottom of the pile here as elsewhere.

Maybe, but when we were at the American Embassy reception a couple of nights ago. . . .

Look at that big Negro boy pissing in the gutter!

Their names are a litany to me. Eloise, Anne-Marie, Sigrid, Chical

Please don't say I never mentioned flowers.

Now you focka me like a dog! Come on, focka me like a dog!

The new régime has certainly cleaned up the prisons, in many many ways. The criminals and political prisoners are now kept segregated. You say segregated? The two sides play each other at football—the Corruptibles versus the Subversives.

I love you. You open up all the doors of my mind and I love you.

I watch him sometimes, driving through life like the blind fists of beggars.

Vandré's in exile now. During the festival, he hopped over the border into Uruguay.

It's God's gift to make us sweat. Forget about your shirt.

People are extremely religious in South America, all the time. But the Lord lets them bend the rules a bit. He doesn't interfere in the *favelas*.

In Montevideo it's even a little cooler.

If God had meant us to fly he would have given us tickets.

You must always realise, Mr. Aldiss, that Brazil is next neighbour to Africa.

The parliament went against people's wishes and so we were forced to get in a dictator. It's much better for the future that way.

When it comes to admiring you, I have to struggle with the repression of my own jealousy, you understand?

I like city life. Any old jungle won't do for me.

And was that girl by the gate a prostitute?

They're whores. She's a whore. I see her most nights when I come home. They've really hot these girls here and will tire you out. You have to look out for them!

Fred knew me since twenty-two years but he only married me since one.

*"God didn't make the little green apples  
And it don't rain in Indianapolis  
In the summertime. . . ."*

Next time we welcome you here again, we shall go up to my estate in Bahia. It's like another world from here.

In your judgment, should there be a difference in *SF* published in a developed country as compared with an undeveloped country?

A week is about as long as I can sustain the role of being a beautiful person. Things don't get stronger.

The hotel's full of awful crippled people thinking awful crippled thoughts and saying and doing awful crippled wicked things.

You worry too much. I used to have these big worries and then one day I stopped it and now they're no bother.

I tell you as an American—Americans are so naive! I mean *North* Americans. Half this bunch never been out of the country before. They're shit-scared to leave the hotel! Just sit up in their room trying to order hamburgers and cleaning their teeth in mineral water!

They're the ones who get the intestinal upsets.

The postcards you write today get home after you, like messages from a displaced person.

You realise this is one place where the skies are bluer than they look on the picture postcards?

HOW CAN you *not* like Rio, unless you are a dead man? It's got all the key symbols of life: city, stones, heat, sun, sand, sea, sex, jungle, all the key symbols, all locked inextricably into the Rio package, and the concrete Christ up on Corcovado above it all with his eyes alight—a splendid gesture!

I never liked him so much as I do here. Do his eyes really light up at night?

After this experience, I never hope to find myself again!

You heard Eisenhower died? Last of the big-time presidents. Me, I died five years ago.

There's a historical reason for it. There is always a historical reason for everything. The Portuguese never tamed the wilderness. They still live with it here. Now in North America, we did tame the wilderness. We swallowed it. Now we have it inside us. These people here, they have it outside them. It's much more difficult to stay a human being in North America than anywhere else. Our mental institutions and cancer wards are full of people who shouldn't be dying.

Of course I'm happy, darling, and I wouldn't have missed these few days with you for anything in the entire lousy world. But I just wonder how much this whole experience is changing us.

I've said it before and I don't mind saying it again, you English are sexless.

Like van Vogt says, we're mutating every hour on the hour. We're all doing it at the same time, so nobody's quite sure what's going wrong.

Look at all these married couples here, carrying their tragedies round with them.

Well, it's nice to share things, whatever.

It's simply the spell of the tropics. Everyone

likes to get away from Protestant cultures for a while.

Who wants to go back to them?

Matter of fact, I was just going to order another drink. Sit down and I'll tell you the plots of a few films.

What does it mean? Read it again!

It says, "This sphere will be a sharp point when it gets to the far corner of the room in your mind."

Very strong in here. Strong, yes? Orange—ooh, not! You laugh my English no good. American good, Brazil bad. Elizabeth Taylor very strong. All right, I'm sorry. Orange. Orange very strong. Case? Okay? Okay? Okay? Flaming fag!

I love the kinetic beauty of the city—I see it as essentially kinetic. The way you're driving along a road in bright sunlight and suddenly—wham!—you're on a six-lane super-highway under a small mountain! And then you're out again, and again the environment's changed.

Many people say Le Corbusier spoils the city when he came in the '30s. Every block in Copacabana has its stilts—that's Corbusier's influence.

The palm trees save it. They take off from the most glaring architectural defects. You can get away with anything if you put a palm tree beside it.

That's not a principle to be recommended to architects.

I do admire the way you boys hold your liquor.

You should see how swollen my ankles are.

Oh, you must know the guy I mean. Got a mouth like a beaver's ass. Used to be a talent scout for Paramount—turned down Marilyn Monroe.

You're the most pure and lovely girl I ever saw!

No shit!

You must excuse but this table is reserved only for German and English.

We're American.

It's the same. No room!

No, it's nothing very profound, but after all your sentiments are only things you adopt for a while.

You help us and we'll conquer Africa for you. It's a world of shifting values but power hasn't been devalued yet.

When I went to South Africa, they presented me with an entry form which had on it White, Asian, Black, and you had to put a tick against one. So I crossed them all out and wrote "Brazilian."

After I met them, I dreamed they stayed at my house for breakfast and I had nothing to give them. It was terrible.

**H**ELLO! It's wonderful to have the chance of speaking to you! I noticed you at the ball last night and couldn't help admiring you.

That's nice of you to say it. I noticed you too and so I came over just now. You must not mind my English is faulty.

We don't seem to be having any trouble communicating. How marvellous to be able to compliment you and get back something real in return. That's one of the things I love about Brazil which couldn't happen in England! People are so much more open.

Well, it is true that we are very relaxed here, you know, more than Europe.

You've been to Europe? Look, let's go next door where it's quieter, and have a drink—it's so good to talk to you.

Okay, but first you had better to meet my husband.

Wherever we go, the country opens up like a flower. At night with the moon over the hill-tops...

And it's fun to have Alpha Centauri in your sky, once in a while.

Yeah. The Tropic of Capricorn.... I never thought I'd make it!

We are right to avoid them, I'm convinced. Sometimes, you can smell the need for you in other people and it's so sad because then you start ducking out of it like we've been doing.

It's so. I'm all too good at smelling that need, and then immediately I find myself preparing

excuses, preparing to disappear, and I hate myself for it—but after all, they don't own any little piece of you.

Right, not any little piece. Look, let me tell you a personal story—

I'm so dissociated. I don't even recall what I said I'd be doing at nine this evening.

Yes, I know the guy you mean. He's flying back *via* Caracas. He's got a bad reputation and you should turn a back on him.

When we were both under the analyst and I was expecting Torrie, boy, we were so broke! —That was before we moved to Hollywood. But now it all seems kind of a happy time, looking back. I remember how I used to just sit 'at Agnes' window and watch the damned sparrows down in the yard there. I've never watched sparrows since, not the way I did then.

Talking about people who use friendship to hunt you down, an English poet wrote a book of poems entitled "Not Waving but Drowning."

That catches the mood all right.

Hearing all the broken English breaks mine up.

You only ever had a toehold.

This is a real man-size sea. Does everything but suck you off!

How many people do you reckon drown off Copacabana every year? I'll bet they never even bother to count. You don't see any lifeguards anywhere, do you?

My father built a big kite when we were living up in Michigan. All canvas and canes and string, you know? When he launched that, it was a really big local event.

I often wonder about the sex life of acrobats.

They generally don't have any. It all comes out in the body rhythms. I had a friend who was in vaudeville for a while and he told me...

Hey, you come on beach with me, mucho sucking, mucho fucking!

On the beach? You're joking.

You come, you see, you come.

A European can only survive here for long by keeping in himself European culture alive, or

the spirit of *makumba* will drag you down. I read all the time only English books.

Oh glorious, yes, and the full moon shining down in the stoned canyons of Ipanema like a big earth satellite! Must be marvellous in the festival when the water's covered with flowers.

CHRIST, how could you tell anyone back home how this place gets you—rolls you over, opens your legs, and rapes you?

It doesn't roll me one bit. I'm catching the plane to Madrid tomorrow. Rio's hot, noisy, dirty, and overcrowded—and the crowds can keep it.

For me, that's all part of the high tension.  
For me, it's Stuttgart-on-Sea.

Open up man, let yourself sweat! What did you expect, Europe?

No, but I can see why they're building Brasilia.

He's a tricky old sod, but I like him.  
Bastard calling to bastard.

We were sitting in this bar on the front and up comes a quite nice-looking young beggar girl and sticks a broken stump of arm in Roy's face. And Roy says, "On you it looks good!"

Let me tell you, I'm Jewish, I came here from Libya, although my ancestors were Spanish, going back a couple of hundred years. I know something about climate. This is a real hot country—men can't do without women. Even better, women can't do without men! And nobody minds about you being Jewish here. In Rio, you can just be yourself. Of course, that has some snags to it.

Brasilia is like Washington: beautifully planned but impossible to live in.

Miscegenation!—Down here it's like mixed bathing!

After a drunken evening, eat *feijoada* next day. That way, you get a *leg* of the dog that bit you!

It's often worse attending weddings than funerals—more uncertainty, you know.

Darling, I know it's only been two days, but I've always loved you. . . .

We have here murdered two hundred people a year.

But I believe your secret police are wonderful.

I'm really smashed.

I'm not smashed but I'm four sorts of drunk. How do you call this poison—cachasser?

In Sao Paulo they say that if God made anything better than women and drink he kept it to himself.

I'll be frank, my reasonings are purely capitalistic. For instance, I didn't care for Robert F. Kennedy, but I intended to vote for him because he was an avid reader of science fiction. My view on Mr. Kennedy was: a person who reads science fiction can't be all bad.

My dear fellow, here they hold that punctuality is a European neurosis.

My gosh, I'll say it's cosmopolitan! Even the whores on Ipanema take travellers' cheques.

BOMBARDED by all these new impressions and modern signs, the brain is a very old object and it's a wonder it ever stands up. Incidentally, nobody has ever explained why the brain has two halves. But a clam has two brains, so maybe essentially man and today's clams have a common ancestor somewhere on the ancient seashores of earth. At least until proved otherwise I consider it a valid springboard point for speculation of a fictional order.

There's no such thing as an immaculate palm tree.

Always I thought of the human race as a menagerie—Jesus, how lovely that Brazil is the parakeet house!

It's not the sound of the city, full of waves, but the sight of it, full of speed and dazzle, that you can't really get enough of. Dawn coming and right down the alley you see those breakers hauling in on the shore, planetary waves arriving from Africa.

Sure, sure, it's visual—a visual place if ever I saw one.

JESUS, it's midnight already—I'd better take off my sunglasses.

# Unreason and Revolution

## *On the Dissociation of Practice from Theory*

THIS IS a tentative exploration of what I believe to be a major phenomenon of our time—the rise of a new type of revolutionary movement. Hitherto, we have been familiar with two broad classes of revolutions and revolutionary movements. First, there are the movements which may be understood as resulting when the normal growth, the spontaneous evolution of a society, meets an obstacle in the form of rigid political institutions that are increasingly felt as oppressive. In such cases, sooner or later an acute political crisis occurs in which the obstacle is swept away by revolutionary action. That is, broadly speaking, the formula fitting the great democratic revolutions of modern Western history; it may also be applied to a number of the national movements for independence from colonial rule that have occurred in our time.

In the last fifty years we have learnt, to our cost, to distinguish a second type of revolution and revolutionary movements—those which I, for want of a better name, would still describe as “totalitarian revolutions.” It seems to be characteristic of them that they do not occur because of the clash between a growing, dynamic society and a static political framework tending to shackle its growth, but because of some elements of stagnation, some major lopsidedness of development *within* the society itself, leading to a deadlock which a dynamic state is then called upon to resolve by the massive use of political force. This appeal from a deadlock in society to the “saviour state” has been the background to the rise of German National Socialism as a mass movement and to the long-lasting reign of violence which its victorious régime inflicted on the prostrate body of society. But the overcoming of social stagnation in the midst of change and of lopsided development has also been underlying the rise of Communist régimes in a number of underdeveloped countries—the only ones that have come to power

by the victory of indigenous revolutionary movements—and has given them the opportunity for their repeated, forcible transformations of the social structure.

NOW IT SEEMS TO ME THAT in recent years, we have begun to be confronted by yet another kind of revolutionary movement. These new movements, both within our Western world and in the so-called underdeveloped countries, use much of the familiar language of Communist ideology, and actually have taken over much of the substance of the Marxist-Leninist critique of Western capitalism and imperialism as well as the Marxist Utopia of a society without classes or domination. Nevertheless they are radically different from the Communist movements that had been created in the image of Lenin's Bolshevik party—different in their forms of organisation, their strategies of political action, and indeed in the rank order of values that gives operative meaning to their vision of the goal. In fact, one of the preconditions for the rise of these new movements has been the increasingly obvious disintegration of the “Marxist-Leninist” doctrinal synthesis; they grow out of an ideological soil that has been fertilised by its decomposition. But some of the products of this decay appear to be as virulently destructive as any Leninist movements have been in the past—without, so far, offering any tangible prospect of comparable constructive achievements.

A PRELIMINARY SURVEY of these new movements may perhaps best start by marking them off with two negative statements. On one side, they are not the democratic expressions of stable, productive sectors of the societies in which they arise; in other words, they do not originate as class movements, as interest groups or coalitions of interest groups. On the other hand, they are not disciplined parties of the Communist type,

organised from the top downward as instruments of a single will, with a systematic strategic concept of what they want and how to get there given in advance. On the contrary, it is typical for them that action often precedes thought. Despite the verbal echoes of the Marxist pathos of rationality that may still be heard from the ideological spokesmen of the Western "New Left," in practice the urge for violent action increasingly outruns consideration of any precise short-term objectives and of the rational tactical and organisational means for achieving them. It is the style of action and the utopian goal that define the movement, while all other ideas and organisational forms remain very much in flux. The goal itself, though it remains a powerful motivating force, never takes the form of a political programme with precise institutional content. That, on the contrary, is increasingly rejected: the tendency is to say that the new institutions, if any, will have to emerge from the process of struggle and from the destruction of the old order.

While the "New Left" in the West thus replaces Communist programmes, strategies and organisational forms by a faith in Utopia and a cult of violent action, a number of revolutionary movements in the underdeveloped world show a parallel trend—away from the elaborations of Communist doctrine and the organisational discipline based on ideological authority, and towards the primacy of violent action over social analysis and of military over political and ideological leadership. We may observe this tendency in the practice first of Castro's Cuban revolution and then of the guerrilla actions started in other Latin-American countries under the influence of the Cuban model; and we find its ideological justification sketched out by Che Guevara and elaborated by Régis Debray. A parallel, if delayed, breakthrough of immediate utopianism and immediate violence seems to have occurred in the transformation of Chinese Communism in the course of the last decade, beginning with the "Great Leap Forward" and the creation of the People's Communes and culminating in the recent "Cultural Revolution." Finally, analogous processes seem to be at work in some of those revolutionary nationalist movements which, without ever having become formally Communist, are developing as passionately an anti-Western, anti-modernistic, and anti-rational outlook as the last-named products of the disintegration of world Communism.

This, then, is our theme. Why do those phenomena arise in various parts of the world at this time? What are the intellectual roots of their beliefs and the social roots of their strength? And what are their significance and possible prospects?

### *From Marx to Lenin & Mao*

LET US BEGIN with a subject we know fairly well—the role of Marxism and Leninism in the development of revolutionary ideas. If we cast our minds back to the 1840s when Marxism was born, and if we recall Engels' proud phrase about the development of socialism from a Utopia into a science, it is evident to us today that the real difference between Marx and many of his socialist precursors was not that Karl Marx was no utopian: his goals were just as utopian, just as rooted in a profound need to discover a road to salvation on earth, as theirs had been. The difference was that Marx turned his back on *romantic* and *immediate* utopianism in favour of a historical and forward-looking version. The birth of utopian socialism in the early 19th century had been part of the romantic revolt of the new-born European intelligentsia against the beginning of industrialisation and the transformation of human relations by an increasingly specialised division of labour and an increasingly pervasive cash nexus. The new turn which Marx gave to those ideas was that he rejected the romantic element in them, the resistance to modernisation based on an idealisation of the past, and proclaimed instead that, thanks to the logic of history, Utopia would be achieved by ruthlessly carrying through the painful process of industrialisation to the end. To quote Raymond Aron, Marx put forward the thesis that the only way to achieve the goals of Rousseau was to follow the precepts of St.-Simon.

This was a highly original idea at the time, one might even say a rather absurd idea. But it also proved an extremely powerful idea: for it enabled Marx to forge a link between the belief in Utopia and the belief in the logic of History. As a result, he was able to inspire a movement that combined the religious fervour of utopianism with a historical and rational element. Utopia, and the violent revolution that was to precede it, were not to be achieved by mere enthusiasm and an act of will. They depended on well-defined economic and social conditions; but the laws of history guaranteed that these conditions would be achieved in the fullness of time. Moreover, one effect of this analysis was to inspire the followers of Marx with a conviction of the vital importance of material progress; for together with the growth of the organisation and consciousness of the working class, the rise of productivity was the most important of the conditions that must mature before mankind could enter the realm of freedom. Increasing productivity would eventually lead to abundance, and only abundance would permit the creation of a social order without classes or domination. Thus the utopian goal and the

violent overthrow of the old order were not the objectives of immediate action: their possibility was mediated by the laws of the historical process, by Reason as manifested in History—their achievement by a rational strategy based on the insight into that process.

IN A SENSE, the disintegration of this rationalist and historic concept of the road to Revolution and Utopia may be said to have started with Lenin—as well as with the early “revisionists” at the opposite pole. For while the latter sought to retain the evolutionary optimism of Marx yet to eliminate the revolutionary and utopian perspective, Lenin was the first pupil of Marx deliberately to separate the task of “organising the revolution” from some of its economic and social preconditions as formulated by the teacher. He argued, under the impact of World War I, that it was the duty of the socialist party to seize power in backward Russia without waiting for the maturing of the economic conditions for a socialist society. He had even earlier “emancipated” this party from dependence on the actual support of the working class by giving it a highly centralistic, instrumental structure. Implicitly, Lenin had thus attempted to replace the missing “objective” preconditions of socialism by the creation of his new vanguard party as an instrument for the seizure of power and for the subsequent transformation of the immature society, and to that extent had begun to turn Marxism upside down. But even while doing so, Lenin still clung to the Marxist analysis in believing that *some* objective conditions were needed for the victory of the revolution—not indeed the condition of economic abundance, of objective maturity for socialism, but certainly the condition of a profound and acute crisis of capitalist society, and of a mass mood of bitter discontent enabling the revolutionary party to gain a mass following. Only once the crisis had reached that stage, he taught to the end, only once the revolutionary party had won a strategically decisive following among the masses—only then could the violent seizure of power take place. As a result, the role of the party never consisted for Lenin *primarily* in the organisation of violence. Violence might play a crucial part in its action at the critical moment, but the primary task of the party was to win over the masses *before* that moment by a policy based on a correct analysis of the crisis of society.

<sup>1</sup> Mao's original view of the special conditions permitting protracted guerrilla warfare in China is contained in his 1928 resolution “Why Can China's Red Political Power Exist,” printed in *Selected Works*, vol. 1 (London 1954), see particularly p. 65. The later view generalising this method is expressed in the editorial note 7 to this document, p. 304.

SOME OF THE STRATEGIC CHANGES introduced by Mao Tse-tung in transferring revolutionary Marxism to Asian soil and deliberately “adapting” it to Asian conditions may still be interpreted as mere developments along the road shown by Lenin. Striving to conquer power in a country where economic and social conditions were incomparably more backward—and correspondingly more remote from “objective” maturity for socialism in the Marxist sense—than in the Russia of 1917, Mao became the first pupil of Lenin to make use of the structural flexibility of the centralised vanguard party by seeking the necessary mass support among the peasants rather than the urban working class, and that for many years. He thus completed the effective emancipation of a “Marxist” party from working-class support that had been implied as a potentiality in Lenin's separation of the seizure of power from conditions of economic maturity and of the party organisation from working-class democracy. Moreover, Mao recognised at an early stage that the role of armed force in the struggle for power was likely to be far more continuous and decisive in China than it had been in Russia—that here, power would “grow out of the barrel of a gun.” But this greatly expanded role of violence in Mao's revolutionary strategy was still tied to objective political and social conditions in two important ways.

1. In the first place, it was in Mao's own view only made possible by the special conditions of a semi-colonial country, in which neither a single native government nor a single colonial power enjoyed an effective monopoly of armed force. That, at least, was Mao's view at the time of his own struggle for power, though after his victory he came to persuade himself that similar “protracted war” strategies would prove appropriate for *all* the colonial and underdeveloped countries of the world.<sup>1</sup>

2. In the second place, Mao never ceased to insist that the success of the strategy of armed struggle depended not only on developing the correct military tactics for guerrilla warfare, but on winning and retaining the support of the peasant population in the regions concerned by correct policies and effective forms of political and economic organisation. Only a policy based on a realistic analysis of the conditions and needs of the people in the area, and a type of organisation that maintained communication with them, could enable the guerrillas “to live among the population like a fish in water,” preventing their isolation by the militarily superior enemy and assuring them of intelligence, of supplies and of a reservoir for new recruitment. This insistence on maintaining mass support by policies based on a study of the concrete social

situation constitutes the indispensable corollary to the Maoist emphasis on armed struggle and its link with the Marxist-Leninist tradition: it is the foundation for Mao's dictum that while power grows out of the barrel of a gun, the party must command the gun. For, though the party no longer represents (as with Marx) the actual evolving consciousness of a working-class increasingly aware of its true historical interests, it still represents (as with Lenin) the leaders' "scientific," analytical consciousness of the total social situation, its contradictions and tendencies, and hence of the objective possibilities for action which any successful political strategy must take into account. To that extent, Mao's concept of the leading role of the party preserves, like Lenin's concept, the Marxian idea of a rational strategy based on perception of the rational laws of history.

YET THERE IS in Mao's emphasis on the decisive role of armed struggle also the germ of a different, more basically "voluntaristic" approach to social reality. This is to be found in his view that the use of violent action by itself may be one of the most effective means for changing the relation of forces between revolution and reaction, because the right technique of armed struggle may enable an initially much inferior, revolutionary force to whittle down step by step the initial superiority of its enemy—to tire him out by exhaustion, cause splits in his ranks, and finally wear down his will to fight. In a sense, the art of ensuring the survival and regeneration of inferior forces resisting a stronger and better-armed enemy is, of course, the essence of *all* guerrilla tactics, and the hope that this will enable the guerrillas to outlast the enemy's determination has always been their rationale. But the fulfilment of that hope depends clearly not on the dedication and skill of the guerrillas alone, but on a number of independent factors—such as the enemy's fighting commitments outside the theatre of guerrilla warfare, the importance of that theatre in relation to his general policy objectives, and the cohesion of his political system as reflected in the support for the anti-guerrilla campaign and the loyalty of his troops.

In the Chinese case, the evidence does not show that the Communists were effectively wearing down the Kuomintang régime (or even substantially increasing its divisions) before the attack of Japan, nor that they had any chance to defeat the Japanese occupants (who regarded control of China as vital to their purposes), until their will to fight was broken by defeat on other fronts. Similarly, nobody has ever suggested that the Yugoslav Communists could have evicted the armies of Hitler Germany independent of the outcome of World War II. Conversely, guerrilla "wars of liberation" in Viet

Nam and Algeria could achieve political victory by military means because neither area was truly vital for the French republic; and Mao's own final civil war defeated a nationalist régime whose political and moral cohesion had been gravely undermined by the disastrous effects of the long-lasting Japanese invasion.

Mao's original doctrine of protracted warfare, so far from neglecting the crucial importance of these "objective conditions," took them into account by laying down what conditions must be fulfilled for passing from guerrilla tactics proper to the stage of decisive battles, and thus implying that these conditions cannot be created at will but must be patiently waited for. (There have been echoes of that realistic approach even in fairly recent Chinese advice to the Vietnamese Communists.) Yet, on the other hand, the attempts of the victorious Chinese Communists to recommend the Maoist strategy of armed struggle as a model for colonial revolutions in general (which became prevalent since about 1959, in the context of their ideological rivalry with the Soviet Communists), have increasingly treated the revolutionary faith and tactical military skill of the guerrillas as universal and sufficient prescriptions for victory in "wars of liberation" that would achieve their magic effects *independent* of the objective conditions in any particular case.

### Castro, Guevara, Debray

THIS GROWING TENDENCY to separate the use of armed revolutionary force from any analysis of political and social conditions, implicit in the transformation of Maoist doctrine under the impact of the ideological rivalry with Russia for leadership of the revolutionary movements of the underdeveloped world, has become quite explicit with the leaders of the Cuban revolution and its would-be imitators in Latin America—with Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and Régis Debray.

Long before Fidel Castro ever dreamt of calling himself a "Marxist-Leninist," and presumably before he read any serious Marxist literature, he acted on the assumption that armed minority action would by itself be sufficient to *create* a revolutionary situation. After this prescription had proved successful in Cuba, Guevara spelt out this new doctrine in so many words as early as 1960. Guevara, of course, did have a background of Marxist knowledge, and in 1960 he still made the validity of the new strategy dependent on one objective condition: the existence of a—presumably unpopular—dictatorial régime. Armed minority uprisings, he then suggested, would not be effective against a government which enjoyed some degree of



democratic legitimacy. However, this qualification was dropped by the *Fidelistas* a few years later, when the democratic government of Venezuela became the main target of their effort to export the strategy—and to some extent the leading personnel—of guerrilla insurrection.<sup>2</sup> Since then it has become an official dogma of “Castroism” that a small but determined and well-led *foco* of professional guerrillas is in principle sufficient to shake the stability of any political system in Latin America, and thus to create eventually, by its own action alone, the conditions for the seizure of power.

The consequences of this separation of armed violence from any analysis of social and political preconditions, and hence from any rational political strategy, have been most fully developed in Régis Debray's book *Revolution in the Revolution*. The political significance of this statement of the new doctrine lies in the fact that it represents more than its author's individual opinion. It was written on the basis of long conversations with Castro and other Cuban leaders, who had made the diaries and other documents of their struggle for power accessible to the author, and it was published for mass circulation and used as training material by the ruling party in Cuba.<sup>3</sup> Hence it must be regarded as an authorised summary of Castro's and Guevara's own views of the “Cuban model” for the conquest of power. Now Debray has become the first to state plainly that it is positively harmful for the chances of armed struggle if it arises from the defence of the interests of a particular productive group; for such a struggle by people who are tied to their place of production—like the miners in Bolivia or the peasants of the most impoverished region of Columbia—tends to take the form of “armed self-defence” also in military

tactics. People who lead normal working lives, however poor and oppressed, have something to lose—their working place, their houses with their families—which they want to defend; hence they are militarily too vulnerable and are bound to be defeated in the end by the government's regular forces. In order to have a chance of success, the revolutionary struggle must be conducted by perfectly rootless, and therefore perfectly mobile, professional guerrillas alone!

In the context of this complete dissociation of the “revolution” from any concrete social basis, it is only logical that Debray goes so far as to give his own, arbitrary new meaning to the familiar Marxist terms of “bourgeois” and “proletarian.” According to him, only the uprooted guerrilla is the true “proletarian,” because he has chosen a life of extreme deprivation and constant danger; he has nothing more to lose but his life, and is willing to sacrifice that. Conversely, the industrial worker in the towns of Latin America is in the eyes of Debray a “bourgeois,” simply because he has a regular job and values it. Now any writer is, of course, free to choose and define his own terminology. But an ideologist who uses the terms of “bourgeois” and “proletarian” in this purely moralistic and emotional way, and defines his “proletarian” as a figure wholly divorced from the productive process, has evidently completely abandoned the method of social analysis which Karl Marx inaugurated by his use of those terms in the *Communist Manifesto*.

Finally, the cutting of all ties between the revolutionary movement and any defined social basis leads Debray with equal logic to a reversal of the relation between military and political leadership and to a new view of the role and formation of the revolutionary party. He argues that it is futile to concentrate first on creating a Marxist-Leninist party which would then organise a guerrilla movement in due course, because the party could only develop in the towns and its leaders might then be afraid to leave the towns. Instead, the only promising way in Latin America will be to begin by recruiting a band of armed volunteers who will form a guerrilla focus. The volunteers may have little or no previous political experience; they should be attracted on no narrower basis than their willingness to risk their lives in fighting Yankee imperialism and its ruling native stooges. As their ideas become more clearly defined due to the experience of the common struggle, a party will eventually arise—usually only after victory—with the proven guerrilla leaders at its head. Thus military leadership precedes political leadership both in time and as a source of authority.

It is no longer the party that commands the gun—it is the gun that creates the party.

<sup>2</sup> In 1960, Guevara wrote: “Where a government has come to power by popular vote, of whatever kind, whether falsified or not, and preserves at least the appearance of constitutional legality, guerrilla warfare cannot be started because the possibilities of peaceful struggle have not yet been exhausted.” *La guerra de guerrillas*, Havana (1960), p. 13. But in September 1963 he wrote that all Latin-American régimes were oligarchic dictatorships, and that the struggle could be successfully intensified by forcing them to drop their legalistic mask. “Guerra de guerrillas: un método” in *Cuba socialista* (Nr. 25, 1963).

<sup>3</sup> For Debray's privileged sources, see the preface to the Cuban edition by its publisher, Roberto Fernandez Retamar, *Revolución en la revolución*, p. 5. For its use as official training material, see Raul Castro's attack on the pro-Soviet “microfaction” (which had complained about it) in *Granma*, Jan. 30, 1968. I am indebted to Dr. Wolfgang Berner's study. *Der Evangelist des Castroismus-Guevarismus: Régis Debray und seine Guerilla-Doktrin* (1969).

*The Pattern of Dissociation*

SO FAR I have discussed the progressive dissociation of the revolutionary struggle for power from "objective conditions"—first from the maturity of the productive forces and of the consciousness of a large, organised working class for a socialist society, then from any objectively given crisis of society and any defined social basis—along the road leading from Marx via Lenin and Mao to Castro.

If we now turn to the problems of a Communist régime in power, we notice in some countries a progressive dissociation of the effort to achieve the utopian goal from the objective conditions of economic development. This is a fairly recent phenomenon. For while Lenin was the first to sanction the seizure of power independent of the conditions of economic maturity, it would never have occurred to Lenin (or, for that matter, to Stalin or any other Russian party leader) to suggest that the criteria of the higher stage of the classless society—work according to ability and distribution according to needs—could become reality before a state of economic abundance had been reached. Stalin was emphatic that the basic task in "building socialism" was to create, at high pressure, those economic pre-conditions which had been lacking at the moment of political victory. Pending the achievement of economic abundance, the link between individual contribution and individual reward—distribution of scarce goods not according to needs but according to performance—was an indispensable incentive to rapid economic progress. Yet in recent years, conscious attempts to cut this link and to introduce the distributive principles of the "higher stage" of Communism in conditions of poverty and want have been made both in China and in Cuba.

In China, this occurred first at the time of the "Great Leap Forward" in 1958, when the creation of the "People's Communes" was accompanied by a major effort to introduce specifically "Communist" relationships, with distribution approaching complete equality as the share of equal "free supplies" in kind in the members' income rose quickly at the expense of the still unequal cash wages. Thus, the peasants were expected to work less and less for material incentives and more and more from enthusiasm for the common good. In fact, this army-like system of equal supplies in kind was for a time described as "distribution according to needs," even though on the basis of the existing poverty the "needs" were assessed by the authorities, and not by the individuals themselves as Marx had envisaged on a basis of abundance. This attempt

was severely criticised by the Soviets at the time, and the Chinese themselves soon back-tracked under the impact of its disastrous economic consequences. Yet in the course of the "Cultural Revolution," they have largely returned to the same basic view that the use of material incentives and income differentiation, which Lenin and Stalin had regarded as necessary tools of economic development, was really a "revisionist" concession to the capitalist spirit. Mao's decisive argument seems to be that, in the light of Russian experience, a desperate effort must be made to educate the new Communist man here and now, without waiting for the achievement of economic abundance, because otherwise he may never be created at all. The remoulding of the people to create the new, collectively motivated man should be given priority over the immediate need for increasing productivity by material incentives, because the latter tend to create not the "new socialist man," but the familiar type of economic man—which to Mao means "capitalist man."<sup>4</sup>

To an increasing extent, the same principles have lately come to be applied in Cuba as well. The use of youthful "volunteer" labour to work under discipline in the rural *campamento* recalls both the earlier Chinese communes and the more recent mass transfer of Chinese students to work in the countryside. It has lately been supplemented by a general ban on overtime payments, based on the same principle that in the interest of socialist education, the needed increases in output must be achieved by appealing only to collective solidarity and enthusiasm, not to ambition and avarice. In other words, here, too, the connection between the achievement of Utopia and the stage of economic development is being denied in action: the goal is dissociated from the "objective conditions" stipulated by Marx.

FINALLY, JUST AS the dissociation of the revolutionary struggle for power from an analysis of objective social conditions leads ultimately to the replacement of the primacy of the party and the political leadership by the primacy of the guerrilla *foco* and the military leadership, so the dissociation of the attempt to build a Communist Utopia from the effort to achieve its economic pre-conditions leads to a change in the basic legitimation for ruling a country engaged in that attempt. It issues in a transfer of the claim to legitimate leadership from the exponents of the "scientific" road to socialism and communism to the exponents of heroic determination, from the technicians skilled in adapting the ideology to economic needs by interpretation to the technicians skilled in enforcing ideological conformity by violence. This is a

<sup>4</sup>See my discussion of "Mao's Revolution" in *Encounter*, April 1967.

development that has not, so far, been fully consummated, but is recognisable as an increasingly powerful tendency in both China and Cuba.

In Cuba, the old Communist party had a much clearer economic programme as well as a much more effective centralistic discipline than the ideologically heterogeneous crowd of Castro's original followers, and up to a point Castro was eager to learn from them as well as to use their disciplined apparatus. But ultimately it was the charismatic prestige of the successful insurrection rather than the bureaucratic merits of long-term party-building, the military prowess of Castro and a few men around him rather than the ideological certainty of the old Communists that legitimated the new leadership. The resulting régime is probably as much of a pseudomorphosis—a similar shape without similar substance—of a Communist party dictatorship as many Latin American "democracies" have been of true parliamentary or presidential democracies. The "Marxist-Leninist" party is supposed to rule and its offices are everywhere, but its central organs hardly ever meet. Actual power is exercised by the revolutionary *Caudillo*, using his personal impact on television on one side and the armed force of the militia on the other.

In China, the virtual destruction of the Communist party machine as well as of much of the state administration in the course of the "Cultural Revolution" seems to have started a similar shift of the basis of legitimacy. For Mao turned on the bureaucracy of party and government with its growing preference for routine and economic rationality in the name of the heroic traditions of "the Long March" and in an effort to train the young generation in the spirit of its veterans. He found it much easier to revive the utopian spirit of the heroic period in the army than in the party or in economic life, and since 1964 increasingly called on all other organisations to "learn from the Army." Having undermined the discipline of all other organisations by proclaiming the "right to rebel" in the Cultural Revolution, while leaving only army discipline intact, he has now proceeded to reorganise the shattered party from the top with an unprecedentedly high share of military men in the leadership, on the principle of sworn personal loyalty to him and to the head of the Military Council who is his designated successor.

THERE SEEMS TO BE a significant parallel here with developments in some of those revolu-

tionary nationalist single-party régimes, particularly in the Arab world, in which the official, ideological doctrine was poorly developed from the beginning, and in which military prestige has therefore sooner or later proved superior to party legitimacy. The case of Nasser's Egypt may be regarded as too obvious to be really significant in our context, because there the military *Junta* was first, and the successive attempts to create a state party have only confirmed its character as at best an auxiliary to charismatic rule by a military leader. But it seems symptomatic that the Algerian *FLN*, which originated as a fighting guerrilla organisation under political nationalist leadership, proved unable to provide stable one-party rule until a full-time military commander took political control by force, barely bothering to have himself confirmed by the legitimate party organs afterwards. The transformation of the *Ba'ath* party, which started with a more elaborate nationalist-socialist ideology than either the Algerians or the Nasserites, yet has degenerated into little more than a congeries of rival officers' clans in both Syria and Iraq, the two countries in which it officially governs, seems even more eloquent testimony to the strength of a general tendency. It may be at least worth enquiring whether this parallel tendency to a decline in the role of political leadership and ideological guidance, and to a reversion of legitimacy to the military hero (or would-be hero), to the charismatic specialist in the techniques of violence, in a number of underdeveloped countries under both Communist and national-revolutionary régimes is not due to the impact of similar causes.

### *Revolution against History*

THE DISSOCIATION of revolutionary passion and action from the Marxist belief in the rationality of history is not confined to the particular examples I have analysed. On the contrary, it appears to be a universal process, in which movements and régimes that remain strongly influenced by a Marxist outlook are ceasing to be revolutionary, while those that remain revolutionary renounce essential parts of the Marxist analysis.

Thus we observe that the Communist party régime in the Soviet Union—as it comes increasingly to regard the development of its productive capacity as the only decisive factor for its advance towards the "higher stage" of communism and as its principal contribution to the victory of its cause on a world scale—is becoming less concerned with either forcibly imposing "revolutions from above" on its own people or actively fostering revolutionary movements elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> It has retained the belief that

<sup>5</sup> For a fuller analysis of this development, see my "Has the Revolution a Future?", *ENCOUNTER*, Jan.-Feb. 1965.

the final, world-wide achievement of communism is guaranteed by the laws of History—but it interprets those laws in an increasingly revisionist spirit as working mainly through the logic of economic development, so that the eventual attainment of Utopia will not require further revolutionary action on its part. Even more explicitly, Communist parties in some advanced Western countries, particularly those with a strong following in a modern, industrial working class, are proposing revisionist strategies for the socialist transformation of their countries by peaceful, democratic methods, based on the expectation that the inherent trends of modern industrial societies will enable them to join the governments and carry out their programme with majority support, and preferably without violence.

Conversely, those "New Left" movements in the same countries, recruited chiefly from students and other adolescents divorced from production, that are preoccupied with the need for violent action and the revolutionary overthrow of the social order, have come increasingly to reject the Marxist belief in the rationality of history and the link between the progress of industrialisation, the growth of the working class, and the utopian goal. Instead, they are looking for support to the peoples of the underdeveloped "countryside of the world" whose revolutionary ardour has not yet been damped by material comfort, and for guidance to Mao and Castro who promise to solve the economic problems of their poor countries through an upsurge of collective effort called forth by an appeal to solidarity rather than to egoistic self-interest. Nor is their choice difficult to understand in view of the fact that the working class in the industrially advanced countries has become less and less revolutionary, and that the successful industrialisation of Russia has evidently not created a society without classes and domination, but a bureaucratic class society still ruled by a harsh party dictatorship after 50 years.

To return to the remark of Raymond Aron's that I quoted earlier, it has become obvious that the world has not come the least bit closer to the goals of Rousseau after following the precepts of St.-Simon for more than a century. Hence those who will not abandon utopianism have at long last decided to try and approach those goals directly. The intellectual importance of Herbert Marcuse for the development of the Western "New Left" is that he has classically formulated this disappointment of the Marxist Utopian who feels betrayed by the logic of History. The author of *Reason and Revolution* still put his trust in that Goddess; to the author of *One-Dimensional Man*, the Devil is the Prince of the Modern World. But once

the assurance is gone that justice will triumph when the millennium comes in the fullness of time, the only alternative left to the believer is to try and bring it about by storming the heavens here and now. We are faced with a regression to a more primitive kind of secular religion—as different from that of Marx as was the faith of the Bohemian Taborites and the Muenster Anabaptists from the main stream of Western Christianity.

### *A Romantic "Left"*

AS THE TERM "REGRESSION" IMPLIES, the breakdown of the rationalist and historical constructs by which Marx had "mediated" the revolutionary struggle for Utopia, and the consequent return to immediate utopianism and immediate violence links the contemporary "New Left" to an earlier type of revolutionary tradition. It is a tradition which, in contrast to Marx, directly expressed the romantic resistance to the growth of mechanised industry and to the destruction of "natural" communities by the process of modernisation, and exalted the values of "life," community feeling, and spontaneous, violent action in opposition to "calculating" reason. There are, in fact, two distinct but frequently entangled strands of this romantic-revolutionary tradition, which we may provisionally designate by the names of two friends who were together involved in the Dresden insurrection of 1849: Michael Bakunin and Richard Wagner.

It is hardly accidental that Bakunin has lately been rediscovered by sections of the "New Left" in a number of countries. What seems to attract them is not just his anarchist vision, the goal of a stateless society of free associations of producers (which others have developed more fully both before and after him), but his passionate opposition to the bureaucratic rationality of the rising industrial age; his readiness to assign priority to the "creative passion for destruction" over any programme for what was to come afterwards; his hatred and contempt for liberalism, reform, and all representative institutions, not only in Russia but everywhere; his belief that a cumulation of uncoordinated, spontaneous acts of local violence could bring down both the Tsarist régime and the ruling economic and social system (alternating with fantasies of a super-centralistic, conspirative organisation which were never put into practice); and his tendency to rely on the uprooted peasant (the "bandit") as the true revolutionary, and on the backward regions on the Eastern and Southern periphery of Europe—on Russia, Spain, Southern Italy—for the ultimate revolutionary assault on the modern core that was already corrupted by capitalism and bureaucracy. Yet Bakunin's Pan-

slavism, his hatred of Germans and Jews, and his abiding hostility to liberalism (which he did not disdain to use as arguments in the "Confession" he sent to the Tsar from prison in the hope of being reprieved) constitute a bond with other ideologies of anti-modern violence directed not to the goal of egalitarian anarchy, but to that of the dictatorship of an élite in the name of nationalism. Richard Wagner, who was to become one of the intellectual ancestors of Nazism, already dreamt—and spoke and wrote—of the destruction of the bankers' rule by a popular Emperor and of the replacement of Westernised, liberal pseudo-culture by a truly national German folk culture at the time of his youthful friendship with Bakunin.<sup>6</sup> The kinship between the more violent and irrational forms of anarchism and fascist tendencies has since been repeatedly demonstrated in other countries and later generations.

Thus Georges Sorel, whose special contribution to the syndicalist movement has been to give it an irrationalist turn and to exalt the role of violence as the test of social vitality, came for a time to support the extreme Right-wing *Action Française* and influenced the élitism of Pareto and Mussolini. Again, if one asks to what historical model Fidel Castro's early intellectual background, his style of governing Cuba by harangues and his reliance on a mixture of nationalist and socialist appeals resembles most strikingly, the picture that comes to mind is not that of any victorious Communist leader, but of Gabriele d'Annunzio, his "Republic of Fiume," and his highly original witches' brew of nationalist passion, anarchist ideals, and plebiscitary techniques of government (though Castro, no doubt, has shown less poetical and more political ability than his illustrious predecessor). And d'Annunzio's movement, by its ideological prestige and its practical failure, helped to recruit many of the cadres for Italian Fascism.

Finally, the semi-anarchist violence of Benito Mussolini's anti-militarist agitation during the Libyan war of 1911, when he was at the height of his "New Left" period as editor of the Socialist party daily, fed on the same emotional and partly on the same ideological sources which enabled him in 1914-15 to break with the Socialist workers' movement as a violent advocate of a "revolutionary" war for nationalist objectives on the side of the Entente, and later to become the founder of Fascism and lead it to victory through terror. I might also mention as

belonging to the same spiritual family those German ideologues of the 1920s—the period preceding the victory of National Socialism—who were then known as "National Bolsheviks" or "*Linke Leute von Rechts*." They sought to combine an anti-capitalist social radicalism (which in their case was much more genuine than with the Nazi party) with an anti-Western, but often explicitly pro-Russian nationalism and with a cult of heroic violence based on the memory of the "front-line experience"—of the true community of those who had been ready to die (and to kill) for the fatherland.

In short, those ardent believers in salvation on earth by political revolution who rejected the historical and rationalist "mediation" of their goal in favour of irrational passion and immediate violence have always tended to rely on romantic ideologies using varying mixtures of arguments of the Bakunist and the nationalist-fascist type. It is typical that in the later writings of Marcuse, his earlier Hegelian-Marxist rationalism is getting increasingly overlaid by the élitist anti-Western cultural pessimism of Martin Heidegger—his first teacher.

### *The Revolt against the West*

THE REVIVAL OF BOTH STRANDS of the romantic ideological tradition in the irrational revolt of the Western "New Left" indicates a revival of the basic emotional attitude underlying them both. The rebels reject the modern industrial world in both its Western-capitalist and Soviet-Communist forms—the crude materialism of its values, the pervasive bureaucratism of its organisation, the purely instrumental character of its rationality. Indeed, their despair is a reaction to the discovery that the process of "rationalisation" in the instrumental sense, which Max Weber recognised as a universal law of the modern world, does not assure the triumph of "Reason" in the sense of the achievement of Utopia. It is the same rejection of the industrial order that also constitutes the fundamental link between the Western "New Left" and some of the revolutionary movements of the poor nations. To the new romantics, Mao Tse-tung and Castro embody the promise of a spontaneous community without conflict, hence without need for rational rules and institutions—just as to Frantz Fanon, Sorel has revealed the liberating dignity of irrational violence.

But this means that in some of the revolutionary movements of the ex-colonial and semi-colonial peoples, we are now facing a "revolt against the West" in a new and different sense. The classical nationalist movements for colonial liberation and for the independent development of the underdeveloped countries have always

<sup>6</sup> For Wagner's views at the time, see the chapter on Wagner in Hans Kohn, *The Mind of Germany* (1960), particularly pp. 196-7. For the Dresden episode in Bakunin's life, see E. H. Carr, *Michael Bakunin* (1937), pp. 186-194.

been, and many of them still are, characterised by ambivalence towards the West. They have been fighting for political independence from the Western powers, for economic independence from Western capital, to some extent also for the chance to preserve their cultural identity, to keep their own soul. But they have also wished to learn from the West in order to imitate it successfully in the techniques of production and power, to catch up with it in science and material development. For the classical movements of national liberation from colonialism or semi-colonialism, one essential goal has been to make their country as rich and powerful as its former Western masters, though this goal could only be achieved by a struggle for independence which often required prolonged conflicts with the Western powers. This was an ambivalent attitude in that it was *not* inspired by a total rejection of Western models and values, but in part by a desire to emulate Western achievements—even though the road there led through a struggle against Western domination.

THE NEW ATTITUDE which we encounter in Mao's cultural revolution, in Castro's Cuba, and potentially in other movements influenced by them (whether formally Communist or not) is a total rejection of some Western values. It is a determination to stay poor-but-honest rather than imitate the West in promoting the development of economic man (as the Soviets have done), to accept some of the consequences of non-development (though not all) rather than assimilate to Western civilisation. Indeed, we observe for the first time since the decline of the early nativistic movements in those countries, for the first time in movements that claim to be not traditionalist but modern, nationalist, and revolutionary, a fundamental resistance not just to Western power and Western capital, but to the pull of Western civilisation that had hitherto been inseparable from any effort at the modernisation of non-Western countries.

THIS IN TURN throws further light also on the revolt of part of the young generation in the West; for that revolt, too, is directed against important aspects of Western civilisation.

This is often denied by well-meaning liberals who, in trying to understand the young rebels, argue that the latter "really" share our liberal values—that they merely take them more seriously than their hypocritical elders and want to *act* on principles which the establishment merely *talks* about. If that were all, we should be faced with a political and social movement of a familiar type, for that is indeed the classical

role of revolutionary (and also of reformist) movements within a growing civilisation—to regenerate the traditional values of that civilisation by giving them a new institutional content corresponding to changed social conditions. Thus the basic Western idea of the rights of the human person has been reinterpreted in course of time from referring to "the rights of each according to his station" to meaning "equal political rights for all," and more recently to imply the rights of each to equal opportunity and social security. But this, it seems to me, no longer applies to many of either the politically active or the passive and non-political young rebels of our time.

For while it is true that they generally accept the familiar values of love and individual freedom, of truth and social justice, merely seeking to turn these values into an indictment of the older generation, it is also true that they have increasingly come to reject the values of material and in part even of intellectual achievement and of the effort and discipline needed to accomplish it, including the discipline of reason—values which are equally essential parts of the cultural heritage of the West. The same is apparent in their rejection of any time perspective in the name of a cult of immediacy; for the sense of measured time and the gearing of action to foresight have been basic for all Western civilisation from the age when Western church-towers were first endowed with clocks to the latest achievements of science and industry. In other words, we are witnessing a major failure to transmit an important part of our basic values to a significant part of the young generation.

Indeed it seems to me that the rebellion of the young which is taking place in all advanced Western countries, and which is assuming both politically revolutionary forms and the form of a passive non-political refusal to grow into roles within the industrial society and submit to its pressures, is not primarily a political phenomenon. It is, above all, a sign of a crisis in our civilisation.

### *Secular Saints & Noble Savages*

FOR THERE ARE, I believe, two basic tests for the vitality of a civilisation. One is the ability to transmit to the young generation its essential values even while adapting their concrete, practical meaning to changing conditions. The other is its capacity to attract and assimilate outsiders, "barbarians," who come within range of its material influence—and not only subject them and disrupt their traditional forms of life.

As recently as the last generation, this vitality

of Western civilisation was subjected to extremely serious strain, for the destructive outbreak of Nazism constituted a radical, nihilistic revolt against that civilisation from within. Yet following its military defeat, the reassimilation of Germany by the West has been extremely successful, and even the Soviet Union, for all the rigidity of its political structure and all the seriousness of its continuing conflicts with the Western powers, shows unmistakable signs of a progressive *cultural* "convergence" with the West. Now for the first time, the West is faced simultaneously with growing evidence of a crisis both in its capacity to assimilate its "external proletariat" (in the sense given to this term in Toynbee's *Study of History*), the poor, underdeveloped, non-Western peoples, and in its ability to transmit its heritage to its own youth.

This diagnosis is confirmed by the fact that the quasi-religious character of some of the new movements is manifested not only in their commitment to chiliastic goals, but in their cult of saviour-leaders and in their search for a new code of conduct. Thus the asceticism and heroic self-sacrifice of Che Guevara have permitted the growth of a legend around him that combines Christ-like features with those of a militant secular leader. The official cult of Mao Tse-tung no longer describes him as a mere creative continuator of the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary tradition, not even merely as the unique architect of the political rebirth of the Chinese nation and state: he is presented as the author of a totally new system of thought and action—a system that will enable all those to work miracles who believe in Mao and live by his new rules. Many of the "Quotations from Chairman Mao" in the little *Red Book*, from which hundreds of millions of Chinese are taught to recite several times a day, stand in competition not with any Western or Soviet political document, but with the *Analects of Confucius* and the Bible.

YET WHILE THE NEW MOVEMENTS are largely united in their rejection of the Western way of life (or, at any rate, of major aspects of it), they diverge widely in seeking to define their alternatives. Castro and Mao reject Western materialism, and at least Mao also Western individualism. But both believe in the need for collective effort and discipline which are rejected by large parts of the Western "New Left" as well as by the non-political Western hippies, drop-outs, and drug-takers. Conversely, many of the would-be revolutionaries of the "New Left" retain an anarchist type of individualism; but "petty bourgeois anarchism" remains a term of abuse in Cuba and China as much as in Russia, while the prophets of a non-

political drug-culture clearly believe that community can only be established by escaping from individuality.

There is, thus, no unity of values among the new movements except in their common target of attack—their negation of the modern industrial society. Beyond that the "New Left's" admiration for Castro and Mao is based on a romantic misunderstanding that sees those hard-driving, hard-driving taskmasters of their peoples as the Noble Savages of our time.

### *A Crisis of Civilisation*

THIS, THEN, IS THE TENTATIVE conclusion at which we have arrived. The new type of revolutionary movements, both on the outer fringes of our Western-centred world and in the advanced Western countries, as well as some phenomena within the latter that are not "revolutionary" in the conventional, political sense of the term, can best be understood as symptoms of a crisis of Western civilisation. It is this which explains their increasing turning-away from the Marxist type of analysis and strategy: for Marxism, in its origin, its values and its commitment to rationality, is indissolubly linked to its Western heritage.

I am conscious that while that conclusion may help us to grasp the historical significance, intellectual background and spiritual character of the new movements, it does not answer the further questions about their concrete social roots, the reasons for their appearance at this time, and their prospects of political success. Nor can I even attempt to deal seriously with those questions in the framework of the present essay. All that is possible here is to sketch out some of the directions in which the answers may be looked for.

The main point I should like to make here is that the crisis in our civilisation has followed an unprecedented acceleration both of the external expansion of its influence and of the pace of its internal change.

Externally, Western expansion over the last two centuries has effectively disrupted the traditional societies created by other civilisations all over the globe. The political reflux of that expansion, the extrusion of Western dominance from the former colonial areas in the last few decades, has not reversed its disruptive effects and has left the new nations with problems of "modernisation" which in most cases are proving far more difficult than anticipated.

As I have already suggested, the goal of modernisation was at first generally conceived as implying at least a partial imitation of the West, even if often by different institutional means—for instance, industrialisation not by



free enterprise but by state planning, or political mobilisation by single-party rule rather than by multi-party competition. But it now looks as if in countries where "development" in this sense proves particularly difficult—owing to the pressure of population, or to the extreme shortage of cadres with modern training, or simply to the strength of traditionalist cultural resistance, or to any combination of those factors—important aspects of the goal itself are coming to be doubted. Total rejection of the Western model is proclaimed in the accents of revolt in order to avoid the confession of failure and the disappointment of the expectations aroused. As the West can always be blamed for having started the whole agonising process by its intrusion, and for either having refused to help the development of the latecomers or at any rate having failed to give enough aid to be effective, the rejection of the unattainable model is accompanied by a deepening of resentment against its possessors.

INTERNALLY, THE ACCELERATION of change in technology, and with it in social structures and habits of living, has in the last few decades created intense moral uncertainty in many Western countries. That moral uncertainty of a generation of parents who on many issues are no longer sure what is right or wrong is probably at the root of their failure to transmit their values effectively, and of the consequent revolt among the young. What appears today as a widespread rebellion of youth against authority is, I suspect, largely born of frustration caused by the absence of authority—in the sense of a lack not of severity, but of convinced and therefore convincing models of conduct. For a growing civilisation to survive in a climate of unending social change, as is the fate of ours, the central problem is to combine a belief in the absolute validity of its fundamental values with flexibility in the practical rules derived from them. As the pace of change accelerates, the difficulty of solving this problem increases, and the tendency towards a polarisation of attitudes between a combination of firm belief with impractical rigidity on one side and of pragmatic flexibility with fundamental relativism on the other becomes stronger.

In the Western industrial societies of today, this basic problem of preserving a continuity of values in the flux of changing conditions and rules appears in a variety of concrete shapes. Probably the most important of those is the loss of a sense of common purpose in the midst of enormous, accelerating material progress. While that progress has not abolished scarcity and made effort and discipline superfluous (as the new utopians believe), it has indeed created an unprecedented degree of relative affluence,

solved the crucial problem of steadiness of employment, and permitted improvements in the standards of living, leisure and social security on so broad a front as to deprive traditional class conflicts of their revolutionary potential.

Yet this tremendous progress has been achieved at the price of a concentration on individual material advantage and been accompanied by the loss of a sense of common purpose, as first the traditional certainties of religious faith and then the substitutes offered by national loyalties were undermined. The moral sensitivity of the young is shocked by the contrast between the intense effort devoted by their elders to the pursuit of minor individual advantages or to expenditure for national military power on one side, and their lack of concern for the suffering of the marginal poor inside and the under-nourished majority of mankind outside the industrial world on the other. The young are all the more assured of the righteousness of their criticism because they have experienced the moral uncertainty of their elders from an early age. As a result, many of them perceive an acute moral conflict between the ideals they have been taught and the competitive conformism into which they are expected to grow—a conflict all the more insoluble because the society which they reject as "empty" is technically well-functioning and is apparently accepted without question by the large majority of adults. Now where intolerable moral conflict is not confined to individuals but expresses a crisis of civilisation, the response has always been an upsurge of utopian beliefs—a collective escape into the dream of a perfect society where every conflict would be solved in advance. The difference this time is that we are dealing with a utopianism inspired not by hope, but by despair. That is the ultimate reason for its lack of a time perspective, its irrationality and its violence.

AS FOR THE SOCIAL LOCUS of the revolt, just as a turn towards total rejection of the Western model is most likely to occur among those non-Western nations which experience the most discouraging difficulties in their effort at modernisation, so a radical denial of the need for material effort and discipline appears to prove most attractive to those strata of Western youth that have remained longest and furthest removed from the productive process—be it as students from upper- and middle-class families or as under-educated members of minority groups who find themselves virtually unemployable through no fault of their own.

Indulgence in pipe-dreams about the effortless abundance possible in the "post-industrial society" is most natural for those who have either been preserved from any contact with the productive sources of our relative affluence



by the economic security of their parents, or have been barred from both those sources and their benefits by the underprivileged position of theirs. Karl Marx once pointed out that while the (non-productive) proletariat of ancient Rome lived on society, modern capitalist society lived on its (industrial) proletariat. But the "internal proletariat" that is coming to be as disaffected from Western civilisation as some parts of its "external proletariat" does not consist of the industrial workers for whom Marx reserved the term. It is a "proletariat" in the ancient Roman sense, divorced from production but convinced that society owes it a living, and willing only to supplement the publicly supplied bread by providing its own circuses. For today as in Rome, the only forms of separate collective action open to a group that cannot withdraw its productive contribution, because it makes none, are highly emotional and violent. The neo-Bakuninism of the "New Left" appears to be the ideological expression of this transfer of the revolutionary mission from the industrial working class to the neo-Roman proletariat of our time. As its purely destructive forms of action repel all productive sectors of society but attract its marginal and semi-criminal elements, the danger of its degeneration into a movement of the *Lumpenproletariat* becomes manifest.

### *The Real Threat*

THERE REMAINS THE QUESTION of the political prospects of these new movements. In terms of "power politics," I do not rate their chances of success very high; that is indeed implied in what I have described as their lack of rationality. Because of Maoist irrationality, China seems to have made very little progress in the last decade, except on the narrowest sector of nuclear weapons; and it will not become an effective model of development so long as it remains Maoist in this sense. Nor has the model of Castroism, and the strategy of small guerrilla bands starting operations regardless of social and political conditions, gained much influence in Latin America or shown much promise of doing so in the foreseeable future—unless widespread failures of development give them a chance. Finally, today's campus rebels are not, like the student movements of Tsarist Russia or Weimar Germany or British India, the forerunners of a political revolution. They do not operate in stagnant or politically oppressed societies and are not the articulate expression of the inarticulate mood

of large masses of people. Moreover, for all the traits of kinship we have mentioned, the "New Left" students are not fascist—and Bakuninists have never and nowhere taken power: indeed they would not know what to do with it.

Nevertheless, the danger to Western society from these new movements is serious. It is not the danger of a "Third World bloc" abroad or "revolution" at home; it is the prospect of destruction, decay, and barbarisation. The real threat is not that Mao will be able to overrun Asia or that Castro will revolutionise Latin America. It is that overpopulation and hunger, indigenous governmental incompetence and Western self-satisfied indifference will cause the festering sores of despair, political instability, and violence to spread. Again, the real menace within the West is not that young extremists will "take over"; they cannot even take over the universities. But they can paralyse and, in some cases, destroy them by first destroying the climate of tolerance and rational discourse which is the breath of academic life. They can deprive our societies of an important part of the well-trained and loyal élites needed for the steady renewal of administration and economic management, of research and education. And they can create a backlash of police brutality and Right-wing extremism which will in effect help them to obstruct the working of democracy and the constructive solution of urgent problems.

I do not, of course, know any simple answer to these problems, any magic prescription for coping with them. All I should like to state in conclusion is that, in dealing with the danger constituted by the new type of revolutionary movements, it is wrong—even more wrong than it was with the old type of Communist movements—to be obsessed with "the enemy" as if he was a devil suddenly appearing out of nowhere, a *diabolus ex machina*. The forces of destruction have, of course, to be resisted; civilisation cannot be defended by surrendering to violence. But this is only the minor part of the task. Above all, civilisation must be defended by upholding and renewing its standards in action, by combining a faith in its values with the determination to apply them constructively in a changing world—and therefore to make sacrifices for them—inside and outside the West. Only if we can restore hope by doing that will the West survive. Otherwise it will succumb to barbarisation—and that means (as the whole of history is there to teach us) succumbing not to some particular barbarian ideology, movement, or tribe, but to its own failure.

Max Beloff

# Rootless Cosmopolitans?

## *A Word about the Jews*

WHY, ONE BEGINS by asking, should there be an "Association of Jewish Graduates" in London? It suggests a desire to emphasise or promote the quality of Jewishness in its members alongside the more tangible fact of possessing a University degree. Unlike most societies that Jews may belong to—philanthropic organisations of various kinds—the Association seems to have no purpose other than the common pursuit of heterogeneous activities of a cultural or recreational kind. Why, then, as Jews?

Such Jewish self-consciousness and the questions to which it gives rise has clearly been a consequence of the emancipation of European Jewry and did not exist before it. Before the emancipation, Jews throughout the world were members of a religious group whose close-knit communal existence was the product at once of the commandments of their religion and of the pressures of the external world. It was a position the easier to maintain and understand because most of the societies in which they lived were societies of a similar kind. The antithesis of Jew was not Englishman, Frenchman, Turk or Arab, but Christian or Moslem.

It was thus easy for Jew and non-Jew to have a quite concrete picture of Jews and Jewishness. When Shylock says: "I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you," he is defining Jewishness in a perfectly understandable way in which the key word is "pray" as Shakespeare well understood when he made Shylock explain his grudge against Antonio by saying "he hates our *sacred* nation."

<sup>1</sup> See the pioneer study by Arthur Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews* (New York, 1968).

After emancipation it was more difficult to explain a community of this kind or indeed to maintain it in face of the increasing secularisation of the host society, and out of this in turn came the modern search for a Jewish identity. For someone like myself, brought up as a Jew but in an atmosphere wholly penetrated by the values of the Enlightenment, not being (in Zangwill's phrase) "a child of the ghetto" nor even strictly speaking a grandchild, but perhaps rather a great-grandchild, the question must always be a difficult one. For those of my age-group the Hitler holocaust cut across and perhaps deflected what would otherwise have been a further mental evolution. If six million die because they are Jews, one cannot say that Jewishness is not a serious matter. The final destruction of the ghetto must have a special significance for the great-grandchildren too.

But to be sensitised to a subject does not necessarily enable one to speak of it from the inside; it is easier to begin from the outside and with the obvious fact that one thing all Jews have in common and in abundance is enemies. Let me begin with a phrase that encapsulates the charges made against Jews in modern secular societies: *rootless cosmopolitans*. This is not of course the only way of defining the hostility felt towards Jews; anti-Semitism is almost as complicated a concept as Jewishness itself. There are its religious roots, and on the other hand, the secular antithesis of religious anti-Semitism—the hostile reaction of those who having urged Jewish emancipation in the name of an anti-clerical secularism objected to the fact that the Jews refused then and there to merge with the rest of the community.<sup>1</sup> We thus get a secular (or "Left") anti-Semitism which has its progeny in Marx and the Marxists who regard the Jewish fact and the anti-Jewish fact as deriving from economic and social con-

ditions, destined to disappear as these conditions are transformed by the proletarian revolution.

MARXIST ANTI-SEMITISM is only partially the result of an intellectual position; it is linked up with popular anti-Semitism, with the undoubted fact that in peasant societies Jews could be regarded as part of the exploiting class and the easiest target among exploiters. Popular anti-Semitism should present no great intellectual problem today, since we see the similar antipathy manifested by newly enfranchised Africans against the Asians in their midst. But this illuminating parallel is often glossed over, for while the Western liberal intelligentsia was not expected to sympathise with the Ukrainian or Polish perpetrators of pogroms, Africans have to be handled more gently. Finally, of course, and cutting across all these intellectual constructions there is the deep psychological tendency among human beings to reject and fear the unfamiliar and alien and make it the focus of its buried mistrusts and violent antipathies.<sup>2</sup>

In this context the recent Soviet synonym for Jews, "Rootless Cosmopolitans," becomes something worth following up, and this for practical reasons as well. Very large numbers of Jews are directly affected by Soviet anti-Semitism; the Jews of the Soviet Union itself, the survivors of the holocaust in Soviet-controlled Eastern Europe—as recent events in Poland remind us all too clearly—and also if one believes that Soviet hostility towards Israel is an aspect of Soviet anti-Semitism as well as of Soviet *realpolitik*—the Jews of Israel itself.

THE PHRASE can also, however, serve as a clue to our proper search, that for a Jewish identity. In one of his essays Isaac Deutscher records his emotions when Ben Gurion gave vent to his feelings about non-Zionist Jews: "They have no roots, they are *rootless cosmopolitans*—there can be nothing worse than that."<sup>3</sup> Despite Ben Gurion's rather lame effort to unsay the phrase, there is clearly within Jewish thought an echo of the most pervasive form of modern anti-Semitism.

<sup>2</sup> The work soon to be published of Professor Norman Cohn and his colleagues at the University of Sussex should throw much light on this.

<sup>3</sup> Isaac Deutscher, *The Non-Jewish Jew and other Essays* (Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 92.

Deutscher's own perception of this fact is both very moving and very revealing. For he himself represented one way of trying to escape from the dilemma of Jewish self-consciousness, acceptance of the Marxist analysis and devotion to the fulfilment of the Marxist vision. Not for nothing was the Jew, Lev Davidovitch Bronstein, the subject of his *magnum opus*.

His commitment to Marxism made it necessary to interpret the events of his own life-time in order to fit a rigid doctrine from which they appeared to be escaping. The ingenuity he showed in doing so may perhaps without fancy be ascribed to his early training in Talmudical studies. But it is an ingenuity which is in the end unconvincing. In one essay, for instance, Deutscher maintains that the Nazi phenomenon in no way invalidated classical Marxism:

Nazism [Deutscher writes] was nothing but the defence of the old order against Communism. The Nazis themselves felt that their role consisted in this; the whole of German society saw them in this role; and European Jewry has paid the price for the survival of capitalism, for the success of capitalism in defending itself against a socialist revolution.

No serious student of Nazism not blinkered by ideology could possibly accept this view. Nazism did not regard itself as defending capitalism; its ideological roots went back to a time before there was any question of a Communist revolution; nor was Germany threatened by one in 1933. If Deutscher had to ignore facts in order to retain his Marxism where Germany is concerned, it was even harder in the case of Russia itself. How did anti-Semitism survive when the Communist revolution had taken place; why was anti-Semitism used and usable as a weapon by the Soviet régime as by its Tsarist predecessor? To explain this once more by "survivals of capitalism" is to strain dogma to breaking-point.

But when Deutscher was not involved in these ideological gymnastics, his genuinely cosmopolitan culture overlaid upon his basic Jewish experience enabled him to see—as his essay on Marc Chagall bears witness—how much the contribution of Jews to contemporary civilisation has been the result of their cosmopolitanism itself—the result of their having lived and worked on the margin of two societies from one of which they had not fully escaped and the other of which they could not fully enter: Spinoza, Heine, Marx, Rosa Luxemburg,

Trotsky, Freud. But could not exactly the same generalisation be made about those whose energies were directed back towards their own people—Herzl, Weizmann, Jabotinsky?

Deutscher does not consider this possibility because he regards the achievement of the latter group as something alien to him. While he found some aspects of Israel exhilarating, others repelled him. His Marxist categories obtrude themselves again. Just as in feudal and post-feudal Europe, Jews were objectively exploiters whatever their own vision, so an Israel dependent upon the capitalist West is objectively “neo-colonialist,” and rightly suspect to the Arab masses. The renewal of the Jewish presence in Israel could only be justified if Jews and Arabs worked hand in hand to create “a socialist Middle East.” What happened after 1945 to the hopeful Jewish Communists of Eastern Europe is not alluded to.

DEUTSCHER’S TALENTS were remarkable, but his dilemma was that of other Jewish Marxists. It was possible to solve it only by postulating a society in which rootlessness would not matter and cosmopolitanism be a matter of course: not the bourgeois society that first attracted men like Herzl and then was found wanting by them, but the socialist society of the future. Communism and Zionism have their origins in the same experience. After their initial divergence they come together in the latest victims of anti-Semitism where Jews in Poland who have for two decades collaborated in “building a socialist society,” and who have repudiated any Jewish allegiance or even interest, are branded as “Zionists” and agents of an international conspiracy. “Rootless cosmopolitans” and “Zionists” come to stand for the same thing.

IT IS TOO SOON fully to understand this tragic paradox. What we do know is that in the Revolution in Russia, its humanitarian side was overborne by its doctrinaire and totalitarian side largely because the latter could exploit the

enormous and primitive strength of Russian nationalism. The bureaucratic élite which rules Russia has always been alert to elements which were unassimilated or even unassimilable. Any element in the Soviet world which has any external point of reference is automatically suspect. Jews cannot be totally indifferent to the existence of Israel, however tenuous their Jewish links, and this is sufficient. In Poland, a national State rather than a multi-national Empire, we may be witnessing the final extrusion of the last non-national element; though Soviet pressure may have counted for something. In the Czech case, the sympathies for Israel expressed in part no doubt an anti-Soviet reaction; and the consequences for the few remaining Jews in that country were fully predictable.

But the way things have gone in the Soviet Union and its satellites does not mean that the more humane aspects of the Russian Revolution could not have a practical outcome in more favourable circumstances; and the place where they have been put into practice is Israel. In the Israeli *kibbutz* we have the implementation of ideas which spring wholly from the Russian revolutionary movement and which are not at all “Jewish” in their essence, since Jewish experience in the diaspora had perforce been individualist rather than collectivist. It is true that some have sought to minimise the ideology behind the *kibbutz* movement and to treat it as a practical response to frontier conditions of settlement; but a recent brilliant description of *kibbutz* life shows that this is not the case, and that the movement remains very bound up with the ideological debate out of which it grew and which is still continuing.<sup>4</sup> Israelis, or at least some Israelis, might be seen as cosmopolitans who have found roots. Are we then to say that from the socialist point of view at any rate, there is no escaping the need for a defined territorial base if a people is to flourish and give the best of which it is capable? Was Ben Gurion, after all, right to align himself intellectually with Khrushchev?

NOT ONLY JEWS are concerned with the answer to this question. All diasporas are today in danger. In Europe the Nazi destruction of the Jewish diaspora was followed by the enforced repatriation of the German diaspora; in Africa, and perhaps one day in the Caribbean, the Indians; over much of South East Asia, the Chinese; and white men wherever coloured men are in control—all these seem threatened

<sup>4</sup> I follow the argument set forth by Professor Dorothea Crook of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in her “Rationalism Triumphant: an essay on the Kibbutzim of Israel” in *Politics and Experience: Essays presented to Michael Oakshott* (ed. P. King and B. C. Parekh, Cambridge University Press, 1968).

and vulnerable. Capitalism and Imperialism were great mixers up of peoples: slaves, indentured workers, migrants, technicians, managers, *entrepreneurs*. Modern collectivism is reversing this trend.<sup>5</sup>

It is a curious as well as an awesome thought. Just when man's links with the soil have become less urgent, when peasant agriculture is becoming a declining element in the world economy, a philosophy based upon closeness to the ancestral soil has become increasingly dominant. To Israel's enemies, she represents the last belated wave of the migration that accompanied imperial expansion, an unnatural European infiltration on to Asian soil, with no more right to international recognition than Mr. Ian Smith's White Rhodesians. To her friends Israel is the natural place for Jews to put down their roots since it was from this soil that they were first torn.

FOR ISRAELIS the question does not arise. They are clearly not "rootless cosmopolitans" but citizens of a defined country with no more need to justify themselves than the English in England. Any Jew—and here Ben Gurion is right—can solve the dilemma of emancipation by opting for Israel. But this does not mean that Israel has no problems of a conceptual kind. For if the logic of modern territorial nationalism is accepted, the Arabs must either be assimilated or they must leave. And what was difficult within the pre-1967 frontiers is more difficult now.

It is generally admitted that the Zionist solution as adumbrated by its pioneers did not adequately take account of the difficulties posed by the fact that Palestine was not an empty land. Why this should have been so is easy enough to see. In the world of late Imperialism in which both Zionism and its Marxist anti-thesis flourished, people thought of relations between more and less advanced peoples in quite a different way from what is now normal. It would have taken rare perceptiveness to see that the explosively vital Jewish communities of Europe could ever come to be equated with the oppressed Arab subjects of the Turks. The Arab

national movement in as far as it existed at that time was hardly present in the consciousness of those involved in the ideological ferment of Eastern and Central Europe. Now that the problem has arisen, there is one familiar way of cutting the Gordian knot. It is to deny that Jewish history can or should be subjected to this kind of analysis at all. The denial can take two forms—traditional (or religious) and modern (or secular)—though if the traditional one had not existed it is hard to believe that the modern version would have come into being.

The traditional view would be that the return to Zion is a fulfilment of prophecy and a manifestation of the will of God. (That some traditionalists argue that the time for the return was not ripe, that the Messiah is yet to come, or that the State of Israel is not the proper embodiment of his kingdom is interesting but irrelevant.) If you accept the religious view, little more need be said. Faith requires no support from argument.

But Israel is a secular State and what we commonly get is a more subtle version of the argument, again emphasising the uniqueness of the Jewish experience but seeing it as manifest in that experience and not as deducible from scripture.

OF THIS VIEW, the most eloquent exponent has been the Israeli historian, Jacob Talmon. "No historian," he writes,

can be a complete rationalist. He must be something of a poet, he must have a little of the philosopher, and he must be touched a bit by some kind of mysticism. . . . The Jewish historian becomes a kind of martyr in his permanent and anguished intimacy with the mystery of Jewish martyrdom and survival. Whether he be Orthodox in belief or has discarded all religious practice, he cannot help but be sustained by a faith which can be neither proved nor disproved.

What we have here is an affirmation of the belief that the survival of Jewry is an essential part of human history as a whole, that its embodiment in the State of Israel is not just adding one more to the list of modern nation-states but has a meaning that extends beyond its frontiers:

I believe that notwithstanding all the vexations and entanglements caused by emergency and inescapable necessity—all so reminiscent incidentally of the times of Ezra and Nehemiah—Israel will one day be spiritually significant and in conjunction with the Jewish diaspora, spiritually

<sup>5</sup> This dimension of the problem is not taken account of in Mr. E. J. B. Rose's report on British Race Relations: *Colour and Citizenship* (London, O.U.P., 1969).

effective in the world. History would somehow make no sense otherwise.<sup>6</sup>

To say that History makes no sense unless this or that happens is to make a claim which transcends the study of history itself; and that is why I regard this approach as the "modern" equivalent of the earlier religious one. Nevertheless, Professor Talmon would as his own writings show, fully admit that the role of Jewry in the last two centuries is only understandable in the light of the general social evolution of the West, and it is not difficult to show which forms of society and of the State have allowed the Jew in the diaspora to pursue with the minimum of friction his own individual and communal life.

AS JEWS SAW IT, the problem was what minimum of separation from the host society was sufficient to ensure the survival of the community if pressure were removed through emancipation; for the non-Jew, what derogations from total identification with the host-nation were implied in Jewishness. When Zionism came into the debate it was widely assumed that its success would itself improve the conditions of Jews in the diaspora because it would show that Jews were as capable of full nationhood as any other people, and relieve them of the charge of being merely parasitic upon other communities owing to the forced maldistribution of their economic energies.

For these reasons the idea of Jewish nationhood had an attraction for some Jews even if they had no particular interest in the possible content of Jewish existence in a Jewish State. Professor Talmon rightly says of the late Sir Lewis Namier that his "essays of wrath and

pride on the Jewish question are among the most moving of all Jewish writings." He adds, however, the fact that "for all its intensity, Namier's Zionism had little concern with Judaism. He knew no Hebrew Literature, he hated the Jewish religion, especially the religious parties in Zionism.... Namier's Zionism was political, untouched by any cultural Ahad-Haamism." And in this he was not unique.

But although it is true that Israel and its achievements, particularly, the world being what it is, its military achievements, have raised Jewish prestige in the abstract, the concrete problems indicated by the phrase "rootless cosmopolitans" are if anything harder to solve. For there is now the new possibility that the interests of Israel as a State may at any time clash with those of the State of which a Jew is a citizen. How does he resolve this clash?

Where Britain was concerned, the circumstances at the time of the Balfour declaration appeared to preclude such a dilemma; on the contrary many people regarded the National Home as an element in the future security of the British Empire. A British Jew could easily and without self-consciousness espouse the Zionist cause, as did the first Lord Nathan, and yet feel quite free to play an active role in Britain's own political life. But Nathan was to live long enough to serve in a government which under the guidance of an anti-Semitic foreign secretary—Bevin's anti-Zionism certainly ended up as anti-Semitism—came to the very brink of war with the fledgling Israeli State.<sup>7</sup>

Or, one may ask what were the sentiments of M. Michel Debré, grandson of a Chief Rabbi of France, when General de Gaulle imperilled Israel's very existence by an arms embargo. It is at these moments that the degree of assimilation of a particular Jew cannot always be relied upon. Sometimes it can be—and one thinks of some Jewish Labour M.P.s both in the Bevin era and in 1956—but sometimes it cannot. And one remembers the way in which M. Raymond Aron turned upon General de Gaulle after the latter uttered his famous phrase about the Jewish people "*sûr de lui-même et dominateur*" and the explanation he gave of how an attack of this kind moved him to recognise the unity of the Jewish theme in history, though not to identify himself with a purely territorialist solution.<sup>8</sup>

When Edwin Montagu and other leading members of Anglo-Jewry opposed the Balfour declaration on the ground that it could not but

<sup>6</sup> J. L. Talmon, *The Unique and the Universal* (Secker & Warburg, 1965), pp. 89–90. Nor need one be an Israeli or even a Jew to see the extraordinary story of the rebirth of the Jewish State in this light. As Soustelle writes: "L'Etat national d'Israël, limité à une fraction de la terre qui le vit naître, est aussi le témoin d'une réalité qui le dépasse, le porteur d'un message de portée universelle, tel que l'ont voulu ses sages et ses prophètes." Jacques Soustelle, *La Longue Marche d'Israël* (Fayard, 1968), p. 326.

<sup>7</sup> See Richard Meinertzhagen, *Middle East Diary* (1959) and H. Montgomery Hyde, *Strong for Service: the Life of Lord Nathan of Churt* (1968).

<sup>8</sup> See Raymond Aron, *De Gaulle, Israël et les Juifs* (Paris, 1968), and his article in *ENCOUNTER*, "The General & the Jews" (June 1968).

prejudice the situation of their community because to the religious and cultural differentiation which a Liberal State could tolerate, it would add a political dimension which it would find harder to swallow, they were right for the wrong reasons. It was not the existence of an alternative home for Jews nor even of a political expression for the Jewish people that would matter but this possibility of a concrete conflict between that expression and the land of which an individual Jew might be citizen, between Israel and Britain as it turned out.

THE PROBLEM CANNOT be dismissed by saying that it is not unique, that there are for instance Irishmen or Poles in the United States or Ukrainians in Canada the cause of whose homeland may run across the policies of the land of their adoption. For in these cases there is no obstacle to ultimate assimilation including biological assimilation. In the Jewish case it is indeed possible, and the absence of a clearly marked religious element in the life of a particular Jewish community makes it more likely. If the Soviet government had been able to surmount its fears and treat Judaism with the same mixture of pressure and contemptuous toleration as it has the adherents of the Orthodox Church for most of the time, Jewish consciousness might well be on the way to extinction. But the existence of Israel has made up to some extent for the declining force of the religious factor. Israel has done the opposite of what Ben Gurion expected. It has not ended the problem of "rootless cosmopolitans"—this would only happen if all Jews went to Israel and stayed there. It has given the enemies of Jewry a new weapon, and the opponents of assimilation a new means of defence. Israel needs the diaspora—and work for Israel (even simple fund-raising) is a new and important aspect of Jewishness.

It is certainly much more important than Jewish secular culture. What we really mean when we talk of the cultural achievements of the Jews of the diaspora is rather what Deutscher meant when he wrote about the contributions of those thinkers and artists who stood on the margins of two worlds and were therefore untrammelled by either. It is the juxtaposition of the Jewish element with some major cultural tradition of another people that produces most of the names that adorn the honours lists of Jewish encyclopaedias. Even so, the phenomenon is likely to decline in importance as natural science becomes the most prominent

element in contemporary culture. Seeing that natural science is in essence universalist and non-national, it makes little sense to claim as a Jewish achievement the work of a physicist or chemist or biologist who happens to be a Jew. He gets no advantage from being a "rootless cosmopolitan" while the artist may.

THE JEWISH CONDITION will thus continue except in the event of another holocaust. Little can usefully be said about the future except that the condition is bound to be an uncomfortable one. The examples of distress within such tolerant, liberal, and humane societies as those of Britain and France are evidence enough. Things will be better or worse according to the temper of the host societies from time to time. What people will tolerate in conditions of security they will not accept in conditions of insecurity, rapid change, or violent upheaval. For this reason, I get a sense of anguish when I see so many Jewish names among the lists of student rioters in this country or America. The risks for a non-Jew of destroying the foundation of bourgeois liberal societies are perhaps measurable; for the Jew, they are not. The turning of the American Negro against his American liberal patrons, many of them Jewish, is something that should be taken to heart. Revolutionary activity by Jews is playing with fire—the anti-Israel and hence anti-Semitic direction taken by the German *SDS* should bring the point home. The Jews who play along with such movements do not know what they do, and their elders and betters have given them all too little guidance.

Jews are stuck with being Jews. However wholehearted their identification with the countries of which they are citizens, the element of distinctiveness remains so long as a Jewish ancestry can be traced. It is a mutation from an originally religious distinctiveness which nowadays takes on new and secular forms. It has been given a powerful new drive by the living miracle of Israel. The most that Jews can do for themselves is to work to build up—or to preserve where it exists—the kind of society in which this distinctiveness does not count too harshly against those who bear its mark. Why this particular burden should have befallen the Jews is something which individuals can attribute to the will of God or the legacy of history, as their own particular faith (or lack of it) dictates.

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## Column

AS I WRITE, it is not yet known who will form the next German government but whoever this proves to be the election campaign itself has shown that Ger-

man politics have lost that massive immobility which has hitherto been one of its characteristic features. Yet before the opening of the campaign there were few who foresaw that this might be so; it remained a fair assumption, shared equally by the political parties, the German public, and most political observers, that nothing would happen to remove the Conservative and Catholic forces—the Christian Democratic Union and its Bavarian branch, the Christian Social Union—from the dominant position they have held since the birth of the Republic; in Germany Christ, improbably revealing himself in the persons of Dr. Kiesinger and Franz Josef Strauss, would still be King and continue to work his economic miracles.

But in the course of the campaign it became clear that something was happening to challenge that assumption. It is a part of the elaborate and almost exaggerated respect paid to the forms of democracy in the German Federal Republic that the result of public opinion polls may not be published during an election campaign, on the ground that they may influence the final decision of the electorate; if you're a German you're not supposed to know how you're going to vote until you've voted. But pollsters and psephologists are a hardy race and not easily discouraged (look at David Butler and Robert Mackenzie!); during the campaign the results of various surveys leaked out to the press and to the public and were confirmed by a survey conducted and published by the *Times*. They indicated that not the *CDU/CSU*, but its junior partner in the Grand Coalition government might be the victor, possibly commanding well over 40% of the electoral vote.

Such a possibility was in itself sufficient to transform and to bring new life into the campaign; and its disturbing effect was reinforced by the series of strikes which broke out in Germany, as in France and Italy, during its last weeks. Tempers noticeably deteriorated, especially among the *CDU/CSU*, and cracks began to show in the smooth façade which Dr. Kiesinger presents to the public. He was reported to have quarrelled with the party's

campaign manager and complained that he was being made to suffer for the mistakes of his colleagues. Franz Josef Strauss renewed his warnings to the electorate that they might lose everything they had gained under *CDU* leadership, reinforced by the truly awful threat that under a Social Democratic government they might be reduced to the pitiful condition of Britain under Harold Wilson. Political debate became increasingly bitter, acrimonious, and personally vindictive. One might have thought one was in the middle of an American rather than a German election.

The increasing ferocity of the campaign reflected the fact, or the possibility, that in the election Germans were being offered a genuine choice and not a foregone conclusion. Politicians, in public at least, are usually the blandest of good fellows. It is when real and important interests are at stake that the fur begins to fly.

SOME, PERHAPS A CONSIDERABLE, INFLUENCE ON the intensity of the campaign may be attributed to the remarkable activities of a single individual, Günter Grass. Herr Grass isn't a politician but a novelist, a poet, and a dramatist: perhaps the greatest, certainly the best known, of living German writers. He is not even a member of a political party but simply, as he himself has said, "a citizen with special talents." And as a citizen moreover of Berlin he did not even have a vote in the Federal elections. He is as good an example as one could find of the artist and intellectual whose great gifts have earned him freedom and independence from the sordid manoeuvres and considerations of party politics.

Yet in the Federal elections he personally and individually conducted a campaign in support of the Social Democratic party which carried him throughout the length and breadth of West Germany, making over a hundred speeches, not only in its great industrial centres but in isolated rural communities which the professional politician does not think worth visiting, writing and publishing a magazine which circulated in tens of thousands of copies, and founding a political association designed to stimulate the German people into active and direct participation in the election to whose results he attached so much importance.

No great German writer has ever intervened so directly and personally in democratic party politics; most have preferred to confine themselves to the purer realm of ideas. But what gave Grass' initiative its individual character is that it was designed, even more perhaps than to win support for the Social Democratic Party and its leader, Willy Brandt, to breathe life into the desiccated forms of parliamentary government in Germany, to associate the Ger-

man people actively and intimately with the democratic processes by which their lives are governed, to bring the *pays légal* into closer correspondence with the *pays réel*.

The response which Grass provoked was equally remarkable, not only among socialist sympathisers, but among those to whom both his views and himself personally would normally be anathema. That Bavarian peasants, the obedient disciples of the Church and Franz Josef Strauss, not very receptive to ideas of any kind, and not much interested in anything except their land, their cows, and their beer, should give a hearing to a socialist is in itself remarkable enough; that they should do so to a writer and an intellectual, unorthodox in his views even by socialist standards, worst of all, one whose books the Church and the CDU/CSU do not hesitate to condemn as pornography, might well persuade one that Germany is changing in ways more permanent and significant than any election result could reveal. It is perhaps equally significant, almost tragically so for democracy not only in Germany but elsewhere, that those who showed the greatest hostility to Grass were to be found, not on the Right, but among the young pseudo-revolutionaries of the Extra-parliamentary Opposition, for whom Grass, as a deeply committed supporter of one of the legally constituted parliamentary parties, stood self-confessed as a representative of the bourgeois democratic state, all the more odious because of his intellectual and artistic distinction.

One cannot even say with certainty that Grass' intervention, despite all the enormous energy, passion, eloquence which he devoted to it, was necessarily of benefit to the socialist cause, or to his friend and hero, Willy Brandt. Any writer of Grass' stature is a difficult customer for a party machine to deal with, a kind of rogue elephant who may do as much harm as good; and there were as many conventional and respectable citizens in the ranks of the SPD as of the CDU who were liable to be offended and alarmed by the label of "pornography" indiscriminately attached to Grass' novels. And Grass himself may have suffered by his expense of spirit in the service of party politics. Since *The Tin Drum*, *Cat and Mouse*, and *Dog Years* there has been a decline in the quality of his writing which some critics have attributed to the demands made upon him by his political commitment; the reception of his latest novel, published during the election, has been unenthusiastic. Even so, I for one would find it hard to regret Grass' intervention into politics. He seems to me to provide an example which other intellectuals, in other countries as well as Germany, might happily emulate. The

best comment on it, I think, is that of Professor Jäckel, a collaborator of Grass, in promoting the *Social Democratic Voters' Initiative* which provided an organisational basis for his campaign: "It may not have been good for the SPD," he said, "but it was certainly good for the Republic."

★

I WISH I COULD FEEL the same way about the political performances of some writers and intellectuals in another great democratic Republic across the Atlantic. I am not thinking of Norman Mailer's candidature for election as Mayor of New York, which, like everything which Mailer does, had its admirable as well as its exhibitionist side. I am not even thinking of the behaviour of those American radicals and liberals who, in my belief, helped to ensure the defeat of the Democratic candidate in last year's Presidential election, with all which that entails. What I am thinking of is the strange controversy, debate, feud or vendetta, whichever one likes to call it, between those two bright luminaries of the American literary firmament, William Buckley, Jr., and Gore Vidal.

I don't know how familiar these names are to English readers. As writers, of course, they are not fit to be mentioned in the same breath as Grass, though Vidal is a very successful novelist and dramatist. As politicians, they have none of Grass' self-sacrificing commitment, though both, in a moment of aberration, have run for public office, Buckley for Mayor of New York, Vidal for Congress. Buckley is editor of the *National Review*, and a Republican whose political position is something between that of Barry Goldwater and Louis XVI. Vidal is a kind of rogue Democrat, whose radical and liberal instincts are apt to become blurred and confused by a kind of trauma he suffers about the Kennedy family, to which he is distantly related.

Not much to go by, one might think, as representatives of the American intellectual in politics. But it was precisely as intellectuals that Buckley and Vidal were chosen to meet in political debate on a television programme which engaged the rapt attention of 150,000,000 viewers and, we are assured by Buckley, "rocked television," if not the American nation itself.

The occasion was last year's Republican and Democratic conventions in Miami and Chicago, in the course of which Buckley and Vidal confronted each other for twenty minutes every night to discuss the televised film of the day's proceedings which had preceded their discussion. The level of the debate may be guessed from its climax, in which Vidal called Buckley

a "crypto Nazi," and Buckley replied: "Now listen, you queer. Stop calling me a crypto Nazi or I'll sock you in your goddamn face!..."

The odd thing is that both participants seem to be proud of their part in this affair, though slightly worried about which of them came best out of it; and both seem to share in the satisfaction expressed in Vidal's remark to Buckley after the programme was over: "Well, we gave them their money's worth tonight!..."

In Britain we have not had the privilege of watching this intellectual battle of giants. But we can re-fight it all for ourselves by reading two long articles by Buckley and Vidal published in the August and September issues of *Esquire*. I suppose that once again the public has been given its money's worth. Both writers recount, in inordinate detail and with such a wealth of allusion and innuendo that at times one has difficulty in knowing what they are talking about, their part in their historic contest, and also its antecedents, for the two appear to have hated each other's guts ever since the Presidential election of 1964, when they had previously met on television. That time, Buckley tells us proudly, he drafted a telegram which began: PLEASE INFORM GORE VIDAL THAT NEITHER I NOR MY FAMILY IS DISPOSED TO RECEIVE LESSONS IN MORALITY FROM A PINK QUEER.

The two articles have a certain fascination because rarely have two writers, in castigating each other's vices, so effectively exposed their own. Buckley accuses Vidal of, among other things, homosexuality, radicalism, illiteracy, lying and dishonesty; Vidal accuses Buckley of fascism, racialism, cruelty, illiteracy, lying and dishonesty, but both somehow manage to convey the feeling that if only they could speak freely there would be worse to come; indeed, some of their charges against each other are so obscure, and are so wrapped in dark references to each other's family histories, that one isn't quite sure what particular vice or peccadillo they are accusing each other of. But at least they do, and it is somehow satisfactory to know that Buckley is now suing Vidal for \$500,000, Vidal is suing Buckley for \$4,500,000, and Buckley is suing *Esquire* for \$1,000,000. I am not sure about the processes of American law but I hope I am not in contempt of court if I say that in these suits all the plaintiffs and all the defendants ought to succeed.

IT WOULD BE EASY, perhaps, to dismiss such an affair as yet another example of the entertainment industry (to which both network television and *Esquire* belong) persuading two talented men to make fools and worse of themselves for the amusement of the public. Yet it has a deeper and a wider interest. In the first

place, the pretext for the Buckley/Vidal act was a political event of some considerable importance, the election of a President of the United States. Vidal says he took it seriously enough to prepare himself for the programme by two or three weeks' research, knowing that Buckley wouldn't (an example of the kind of infantile one-upmanship to which both Buckley and Vidal are addicted). But in neither of these articles is there any suggestion that it could be of any importance compared with their mutual and public excoriation of each other's character and private life. Indeed, both seem to have behaved as if they were engaged in a contest for some mysterious nomination of their own, using all those weapons of abuse, invective, innuendo, and misrepresentation which are indeed common enough in democratic politics but yet have behind them a purpose more serious than mere personal exhibitionism and vindictiveness.

And in the second place, it may throw some light on the whole sorry affair that it was not even the real stuff of politics which they took as the occasion for their act, but the highly selective and edited version of it which appeared on the television programme to which their cat-and-dog discussion was a contribution. The shadow-play of passion and invective played out by Buckley/Vidal (one tends to think of them as one person because in some strange way, for all their mutual detestation, they present mirror images of each other) was itself only the shadow of a shadow, and in this doubly filtered process the possibility of any genuine political discussion had been drained away, leaving behind only a caricature of itself.

In this as in many other ways there could be no greater contrast between the way in which Grass presented himself, in person and without adventitious aids, to the German electorate and that in which Buckley/Vidal reduced the democratic processes of a Presidential election to an opportunity for the exhibition of personal bile and spleen, without wit, without charm, and without dignity. "Feline" and "catty" are two of the words most commonly applied to the Buckley/Vidal exchanges by the press, but to use them thus is really an insult to the animal world; my dog, much less my cat, would be ashamed of the heavy-handedness of their methods. It is common, both in Britain and the United States, to speak somewhat patronisingly and complacently about the Germans' capacity either for democracy or for culture, but, comparing Grass with Buckley/Vidal one begins to doubt whether this assumption of superiority is justified. One is tempted to parody Professor Jäckel's remark: "It may have been good for Buckley/Vidal—but it certainly wasn't good for the Republic..."

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# F I L M

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## The Outsider Rides Again

By John Weightman

ONE OF MY FAVOURITE bedside books is Lance Robson's *Varieties of the Picaresque*, in which that rather eccentric critic demonstrates, to his own satisfaction at least, that the outsider, far from being a specifically modern phenomenon, has always been the commonest type of hero, both in real life and in art. The Existentialist *étranger*, of whom "the angry young men," the hippies and the drop-outs are Anglo-American versions, was preceded (says Robson) by a long series of alienated types. To name only a few: the late 19th-century aesthete, the *poète maudit*, the Romantic hero, the 18th-century picaresque adventurer, the Renaissance individualist or Don Juan figure, the medieval knight-errant, bastard or rogue, and the clever slave or recalcitrant plebeian of classical antiquity. He even carries the theme back into mythology. What are Prometheus, Oedipus, Orestes and Ulysses but variations on the outsider? Jesus of Nazareth was a sacred bastard, just as T. E. Lawrence was a puritanical one and Jean Genet is a profane one. And he adds that he places them all under the heading of the "picaresque" (a term that was not invented until the late 15th century), because it combines the idea of the uncertain or hostile attitude of an individual to existing society with the concept of movement. The outsider tends to be peripatetic, because he is *fleeing from*, *looking for*, or *passing through*. However—and this is perhaps where Robson strains his thesis into paradox—he invents the category of the "stationary picaresque." This includes both those people who never move from one spot yet act out their alienation imaginatively or rhetorically (cf. Jimmy Porter in *Look Back in Anger*) or the hordes of motorists in all countries who move to and fro simply for the sake of moving and whose encapsulated oscillation is at once equivalent to immobility and a strange collective expression of their dim awareness of contingency.

But the most interesting part of Robson's thesis is the assertion that "society" is, and always has been, much more of an illusion than people usually think. The surprising thing, he

argues, is not that there should be so many outsiders, but that disparate individuals can ever agree with each other sufficiently to create an "inside." By what miracle, he asks, do men establish an Establishment? He finds it astonishing that trains should run on time, hospitals function more or less adequately, and people be willing to respect each other's property or pay income tax. It is clear that Robson is basically a Hobbesian and has little confidence in the natural benevolence or collective efficiency of man. He seems to think that everybody is ultimately an outsider trying, more or less effectively according to his talents, to impose his own view of what society should be on his fellows, and the ideal more often than not is an extension of his own ego. Robson makes some stimulating, if debatable remarks, about "the adventurer from the periphery"—Napoleon, Stalin, Hitler, *et al.*—the picaresque significance of the Jewish diaspora and the complexities of the "upstart-downstart" relationship. (He sees Churchill, for instance, as a downstart conditioned by his non-inheriting position in the aristocracy and the traumatic effect of a doomed, syphilitic father, whereas de Gaulle is an upstart inhabiting a magnificent, synthetic persona.)

I MENTION ALL THIS because the Robsonian analysis, exaggerated though it may be, kept coming into my head again and again as I watched two recent and enjoyable American films about the alienated individual: *Easy Rider*, the much publicised hippie work associated with the name of the producer, Peter Fonda, but actually directed by Dennis Hopper, and *Good-bye Columbus*, directed by Larry Peerce and based on a short story by Philip Roth.

*Good-bye Columbus* is the simpler of the two, and is immediately comprehensible as an instance of what Robson would call the stationary, Jewish picaresque. The story was published as long ago as 1957 and since then, as we all know, Roth has gone on to write *Portnoy's Complaint*, which is an aggressive, and much more highly developed, version of the same theme. The back-

ground in both is not so much society in general as the New York Jewish community. It is a commonplace that Jewish family and social life is still closely-knit even today, because the Jews have had to compensate for their historical alienation as a group. Much of the humour of *Good-bye Columbus* comes from the fact that the film centres around a Jewish family that has made good and is therefore super-American in a conventional way. The old furniture "from when we were poor" is kept in an attic, but the new house bristles with gilt and gadgets. Poppa showers benefits upon his children; the son is a baseball champion at Columbus (Ohio), and so neurotically intent on integration that his favourite record is the college anthem (hence the title); the elder daughter is the beauty of the country club, and the younger one an impossibly spoiled American child. When the son marries, the wedding—the major sequence of the film—is a riot of American materialism and Jewish community feeling, covering the essential isolation of the individuals concerned.

All this is seen with quizzical detachment by the hero, Neil, a Jewish opter-out, who is having an affair with Brenda, the elder daughter. Neil has several reasons to be alienated; he is a metaphorical orphan/bastard, his parents having left him at an early stage in the care of an oppressively affectionate aunt. He has also been affected by military service, and has given up various lucrative jobs because he found them soul-destroying. He is now earning a bare living as an assistant in the public library, and has no ambition: "I am not a doer, I am a liver." In short, he is exactly like the original modern outsider, Meursault in Camus' *L'Étranger*, except that he is more humorous. Richard Benjamin acts the part beautifully, equalling the subtlety of Dustin Hoffman's performance in the similar role in *The Graduate*.

The limitation of the film is that the psychology remains undeveloped and the tragedy is not completely focused. Neil is a quietist, who does not want to get married, does not want children, does not want to get on, etc. The anti-ambitious outsider is, of course, just a reversal of the ambitious *picaro*, and the crunch usually comes when sexual attachment or love obliges him to take responsibility for someone else and so come to terms with society. However, Neil just gives up Brenda without a struggle, as if he were egotistically unfeeling, and the film peters out, with his character or temperament sadly diminished. This is not the fault of the director, who does wonders with the details of the scenario, but a weakness of the short story form which can accept a trick ending.

The superiority of *Portnoy's Complaint*—if I may digress for a moment—lies in the greater

intensity of the central character. Portnoy is a Jew with a mythic concept of Gentile society, which he wishes to enter by going to bed with blonde Gentile girls; hence his picaresque adventures. The repeated joke is that everything which makes him a recalcitrant insider in Jewish society makes him an outsider in Gentile society, until he gets to Israel, where his non-Israeli Jewishness makes him an outsider in the Promised Land. But a more profound and universal perception in the book is that the sexual impulse, even without a specific object, can create alienation within the male. Portnoy is whisked along helter-skelter by his penis, as if it were a runaway horse, or a spirit that had got possession of him, and he is trying to deflect it significantly on to Gentile girls, away from auto-eroticism which is a sterile polarity or division within the self. Perhaps, if the permissive wave continues, some film director will find a way of expressing this on the screen. He might, incidentally, get some useful ideas from *Varieties of the Picaresque*, which has an amusing chapter on "The Phallus as Picaresque Familiar," running the whole gamut from Pan, Mercury, and Harlequin to Don Juan/Leporello, Scapin, and Figaro.

*EASY RIDER* is, technically, not so accomplished a film as *Good-bye Columbus*, because it is self-indulgent and rather empty in places, but it is absolutely up-to-date in mood and theoretically more complex. It is the first full-scale commercial hippie film I have seen, and the first open presentation of marijuana-smoking as a way of life, or anaesthetised prelude to death. There have been many underground films with a similar flavour, but they are for the most part disjointed, often repulsive, and totally uncommercial. With *Easy Rider*, the hippie exercises charm, exudes pathos, and breaks into the big money; that is, the outsider mentality, at least in a weak form, has become so general that it is now an immense market ready to be tapped. The phenomenon is the same as the recent gathering in the Isle of Wight, at which (according to the newspapers) Bob Dylan earned £35,000 by an hour's singing. He later complained—whether cynically, wryly or naïvely, it is impossible to say—that singers like himself are taken too seriously by the press; but the press, being a function of the consumer-society, naturally pays most attention to those people who make the biggest killing.

In a long and revealing interview published in *The Rolling Stone*, Peter Fonda says it has taken him some time to convince Hollywood that an absolutely sincere movie could be a success. I think I see what he means; this film is presumably meant to be a genuine expression

of the outsider-philosophy of its makers, Fonda and Hopper, neither of whom is very young any more (29 and 35?), and who at times must both have lived marginally and precariously. There are also signs that Fonda has a famous-father complex, which is often a contributory cause of alienation. But I suspect that sincerity has many false bottoms. One can be sincere in one's *mauvaise foi*, especially if it is rather different from what one takes to be the prevailing *mauvaise foi* around one. In other words, alienation can be genuine, without leading to total honesty of thought. Fascinating as I found *Easy Rider*, I think it represents just such a case.

The press hand-out says: "... 'freedom' is ... the subject of the picture—the freedom longed for by so many people all over the world today." The two heroes, one tall, lean and rather spiritual (Fonda), the other round, clumsy and fleshy (Hopper)—i.e., a variation on the typically picaresque pair, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza—set out on a pilgrimage across America from Los Angeles to New Orleans in search of freedom. They finance their expedition by smuggling some unspecified hard drug across the Mexican border, thus collecting a fat wad of notes all in one go. Technically, this is a criminal act, if one believes in the official law, but presumably hippies do not. Morally, it is reprehensible, if one thinks that drugs are harmful and drug-profiters disgusting. The film is undecided on this point; the heroes accept marijuana as a necessary concomitant of life, but stall on the vital question of the relationship between marijuana and the hard drugs. Intellectually, it is a contradiction; money, which is by definition a medium of exchange, can only retain its value if society is a going concern and the majority accept the unwritten social contract. Individuals who steal money or get it by immoral means are counting on other people remaining more moral than they are. They can only be consistent with themselves if they are cynical anarchists, who despise humanity in the mass. But in the very first episode of the film, which is an encounter with an honest rancher who feeds the travellers according to the old traditions of hospitality and says grace before meat, Peter Fonda looks around, nods his head sagely and opines with apparent seriousness: "You ought to be proud. . . ." Well, if the rancher ought to be proud, the hero played by Fonda ought to be deeply ashamed of himself, but there is no indication that he is. His implied morality is not at all in line with his initial misdemeanour. Possibly we are meant to suppose that, society being imperfect, the freedom-loving individual is entitled to use egotistical means to win his freedom. Common sense surely tells us that this has always been the philosophy of the crook and the speculator.

HOWEVER, LET US ACCEPT the fact that two characters have "made their pile" immorally, like any early capitalist adventurers. This is a first picaresque act. They then use the money to go on a spiritual quest or odyssey, in search of "freedom," that is, of pure experience outside the normal obligations of society. This is a second, and quite common, form of the picaresque: the hero, instead of being ambitious to win his way to the inside of the existing Establishment—supposing there is one—is looking for satisfaction elsewhere. He wants to find the Holy Grail, or Shangri La, or El Dorado, or the Land of Eternal Innocence. In this case, the heroes do not set their sights very high; they aim at the Mardi Gras festival in New Orleans, which must be pretty commercialised by now. But I suppose New Orleans is still exotically French, and Mardi Gras, however debased, still has an echo of the Roman Saturnalia, which was a ritual reversal of the social norms. As it happens, the heroes ultimately aim for a brothel in New Orleans; this is a very old-fashioned twist, positively Baudelairean in fact, because one would expect only a muddled, recalcitrant, 19th-century bourgeois to imagine that a brothel is outside established society. Perhaps Fonda and Hopper sense this, because they refrain from actually copulating in the brothel, which would be to accept it for what it is, a flesh-shop on the same level as a fish-and-chip shop. They take the girls out into the festival and then have what is objectively a very unpleasant LSD trip with them among the urns and crypts of a cemetery. In the barbaric 18th century, the Marquis de Sade was prosecuted for giving Spanish fly to a prostitute. I don't know what the appropriate penalty would be in the 20th century for someone who gives LSD to a prostitute, thus causing her to sob dementedly as she rubs her naked breasts and pubis against a marble tombstone. I would say that there ought to be a penalty for degrading the already degraded; but then I cannot see LSD as it is presented in this and other films, as being an agent of liberation. The cemetery sequence must be intended as a highlight, since it is the most elaborate in the film; but to me, and no doubt to most people of my generation, it is just a sickening nightmare. Then the scene changes suddenly, the prostitutes have disappeared without trace, and our two heroes are on their way again, rushing lyrically through the morning landscape on their motor-cycles, as if the nightmare had never occurred.

I am not sure that I can make sense of this. The LSD had been given to them by a Christ-like hippie, to be shared with two other people in some exceptional moment of communion. The religious parody seems obvious: the drug is like the bread and wine to be shared ritually

"whenever two or three are gathered together"; but in fact the drug separates the four people into slobbering imbeciles. Perhaps we have to understand the "trip" as an individual mental blow-out, orgasm, or temporary suicide, which relieves nervous tension like the detumescence consequent on the sexual act. If so, the term "trip" is fully significant. Just as the heroes travel literally on their motor-cycles, because physical movement gives a potent illusion of freedom, so, on the drug, they travel metaphorically "anywhere out of the world" (to use Baudelaire's phrase). To be accurate, they combine the two kinds of travel in a weaker form all the way through, since they smoke marijuana every day before starting off. Their bodies are travelling on one level and their heads on another. Surprisingly enough, they can still steer; I wonder if this is an honest detail.

I HAVE NOT YET summarised the story in sequence, and I should perhaps now do so to make my final comments intelligible. The heroes have the following encounters: 1. with the honest rancher already referred to (pastoral simplicity); 2. with a Hippie Commune, who are trying to scratch a living on dry, hilly ground and who pray collectively for rain to an unnamed God (they too represent pastoral simplicity, and Fonda declares sententiously that their efforts will be rewarded, even though there seems to be no hope of such a possibility); 3. with two of the hippie girls, with whom they bathe in a mountain pool (the pastoral innocence of nudity); 4. a small-town parade that they make fun of, with the result that they are put into jail (the parade represents average conformity, which they see as comic); 5. a drunken young lawyer, the son of the local big-wig, who gets them out of jail, joins them on their pilgrimage and is murdered by local roughs, presumably because of this (the character, marvellously played by Jack Nicholson, is a traditional alcoholic drop-out, whom the heroes convert to marijuana); 6. a bunch of conformist provincials who prevent them being served in a café; 7. the prostitutes (traditional social outcasts); 8. two truck-drivers, who shoot at long-haired Hopper to give him a fright but accidentally kill him, and so have to murder Fonda as well to cover up their tracks. The film ends with a vision of the second motor-cycle bouncing off the road and bursting into flames. Death of the outsider, killed by the philistine incomprehension of the mass of insiders, who murder him not for the colour, but for the length, of his hair.

IF WE STICK to the Robsonian analysis, I think we have to say that the two picaresque heroes

of *Easy Rider* are doomed from the outset. Their journey is very similar to the drive from Marseilles to Paris in Godard's *A bout de souffle*, which is another example of the Outsider, a frankly criminal one, riding to his death. The crime which finances their journey is, in a sense, justified, or at least explicable, by the fact that the freedom they are looking for is unobtainable in this life. Their thirst for it is a concealed death-wish, and indeed their round-the-clock reliance on marijuana, a drug which may be harmless but has the effect of making the initiates giggle happily at everything and anything—i.e., provides permanent anaesthetisation—is more ominous than the usual philistine reliance on a cup of coffee or a nice cuppa tea. They are not really looking for freedom in modern America, which is an advanced industrial civilisation. They move along the margin from drop-out to drop-out, and although they are emotionally in favour of a return to pastoralism and pay lip-service to it, they do not believe in it enough to accept it for themselves. The reason is that even a pastoral society at once raises the problems of community living and imposes the constraints of integration. They are lone riders, appreciating the beauty of mountain and desert scenery, which indeed steals a good part of the picture, but there is no ideal society for them.

However, they can be photographed in their predicament among the lonely hills, and people will flock to see the film when it is shown in the large urban centres. The industrialised philistines will enjoy the pastoral poetry of alienation, and the ex-Outsider can cushion his death-wish with dollar bills as well as marijuana.

THERE REMAINS ONE incidental point, about which I am sure Lance Robson will have something to say, if he ever produces the promised sequel to *Varieties of the Picaresque*. Why has the motor-cycle been so often associated with the outsider in recent years? In the existing volume, he waxes eloquent about the relationship between the knight-errant or the highwayman and his horse, from the Middle Ages to the 18th century, and he has a fascinating appendix on the importance of the single- or double-seater aeroplane between 1910 and the Battle of Britain, and the Outsider/Insider philosophy that certain writers (notably St. Exupéry), based upon it. Possibly, the motor-cycle seems more personal than a four-seater motor-car. (In *Bonnie and Clyde*, as I remember, the initial car was an open two-seater with a dicky, i.e., more of a folk-object than the limousine type.) The rider is *outside* the motor-cycle, not enclosed within it. He is exposed to the air and the



weather, and so nearer to nature. He grips the body between his legs and thus simulates the sexual relationship between the rider and his horse, often with precise physical results, as the sociologists investigating the leather-boys have explained.

Nevertheless, the motor-cycle and the petrol which drives it are indissolubly wedded to the industrial society, and it is remarkable that the Hippie mind can overlook this fact. At the beginning of *Easy Rider*, the heroes throw away their watches in a symbolic gesture and roar off superbly down a metalled road. But without the society that the watches suppose, they could not roar and there would be no road.

**M**IDNIGHT COWBOY, which I have just seen, fits so neatly into the Robsonian pattern and is so obviously the same kind of film as the other two, that I cannot forbear adding a few sentences about it. Technically, it is possibly the best of the three, because of the intelligence of John Schlesinger's direction and two absolutely stunning performances by Jon Voigt and Dustin Hoffman. Of course, like the other films, it is tinged with modishness. Pop songs replace the angel choruses of earlier days; the colour photography has a lush beauty of its own, which gives even would-be drab scenes a sort of tinned-soup vividness; and there is the now obligatory party episode or fiesta, with psychedelic lights and drugged wooziness. Some of these things, I am afraid, will date as quickly and disastrously as the dance sequences and plumed costumes in Hollywood films of the '30s.

The original novel by James Leo Herlihy might well be, but probably isn't, an imitation of the first part of a famous 18th-century, French picturesque tale by Marivaux, *Le Paysan parvenu*, about a handsome peasant boy who comes up to Paris to make his fortune by seducing rich middle-aged women. Joe Buck (Jon Voigt) is a beautiful, blond Texan dish-washer, who dresses up in cowboy kit, jumps on to a bus and goes up to New York where he hopes to get rich quick as a bisexual prostitute. He, too, is a sort of orphan/bastard, and his alienation is increased by his consciously accepted low *I.Q.*, which forces him to trust his only talent ("I'm one helluva stud").

The term "midnight cowboy" would seem to refer to the young men so dressed who hang around certain parts of New York at night looking for trade (*cf.* the similar cowboy in the play, *The Boys in the Band*). Robson touches on the ordinary myth of the cowboy and argues that it is often, as in *Shane* or many T.V. serials, a modernisation of the knight-errant theme. The cowboy *passes through*, because he is a good or bad man on the run, or because he is an incarna-

tion of supernatural values, which are applied locally through his visitation, but have no permanent residence in this world. He has a horse and a gun, whereas the knight had a horse and a sword or lance. Both heroes symbolise movement plus potency, a two-fold ideal which corresponds perhaps to a deeper male aspiration than the desire to construct in one place (a creative urge involving a female element). The "midnight cowboy" is a strange simulacrum of the normal ideal. He is more or less stationary on the streets at night, instead of galloping across the plains in sunshine; he is waiting to be selected by the cows, in the hope that he may be able to drive them singly; he has no horse, and his only gun is inherent in his person. He is reduced, in fact, to his body and his costume, and the latter is a highly significant symbol both for himself and his clients. This gives great tragi-comic weight to the most sordid scene in the film, a fellatio episode in a cinema lavatory, when the cowboy, still dressed in his hat, jerkin and boots, argues with his pathetic, vomiting client about the price to be paid. The sad little man turns out to be as impoverished as he is, and this shows up the cowboy costume as a tawdry double illusion.

The miracle of the performance is that Jon Voigt conveys the amoral, delinquent zest of the *picaro*, combined with naïve and fundamental goodness. He has a perfect foil in Dustin Hoffman, as Ratso Rizzo, the crippled, tubercular orphan of an Italian-Jewish shoe-shine man. Ratso is the city urchin with brains, or at least shrewdness, who tries to help the cowboy to make the most of his sexual advantages, for their common benefit. Their relationship is a parody of the Don Juan/Leporello or Don Juan/Figaro collaboration, in the sense that they always fail but in the process unconsciously become friends, although they bicker comically at every point. Whereas the cowboy dreamed of city lights and his long initial bus ride is an imaginary journey towards easy money, Ratso hopes to set out on the reverse quest; he wants to escape from New York to Florida, where the sun will restore his health and he will recover the dignity of his true name, Henrico Rizzo. By braining and robbing an old queer, the Cowboy gets enough money for the trip and they take the bus ride to Florida, where he proposes to give up being a *picaro* and to look for a job. But, on arrival, Ratso is dead in his seat.

This film is, apparently, just as great a commercial success as *Easy Rider*. It is hilariously funny in parts, especially about sex, but this can hardly explain its popularity because it is also very sad. Robson, I suppose, would say that the Outsider riding to his death, and who makes a Friend on the way, is a universal image.

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# SCIENCE

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## “Nothing But—”

*On Reductionism & Nihilism — By VIKTOR E. FRANKL*

WE ARE challenged by the question how to maintain or to restore a concept of man that does justice to the humanness of man and more specifically to the one-ness of the human person—in the face of the scattered data, facts and findings as they are furnished by a thoroughly compartmentalised science. The pictures we obtain today from the various individual sciences are very disparate, and differ from each other so much that it is becoming more and more difficult to arrive at a unified world-view. But such differences, *per se*, need by no means constitute a loss in knowledge; on the contrary, such differences may well make for a gain, as in stereoscopic vision. There is a difference between the right and the left pictures offered to you. But it is precisely this difference that mediates the acquisition of a new wholeness, of an additional dimension, the third dimension of space. To be sure, the precondition is that we achieve a fusion between the picture on the right and on the left. And what holds for vision is also true of cognition: unless we obtain a fusion, confusion may be the result.

Now the pluralism of science is reflected in the individual scientist's increasing trend towards specialisation. The wheel of history cannot be turned back, and society today cannot do

without specialists; too much research is based on teamwork, and in teamwork the specialist is simply indispensable. However I, for one, think that the present danger does not really lie in the loss of universality on the part of the scientist, but rather in his pretence and claim of totality. When a scientist who is an expert in the field of biology attempts to understand the phenomena of human existence in exclusively biological terms, he has fallen prey to biologism. And at the moment biology becomes biologism, science is turned into an ideology. What we have to deplore, therefore, is not so much the fact that *scientists are specialising*, but rather the fact that *specialists are generalising*. That is to say indulging in over-generalised statements. We have for long been familiar with the *terrible simplificateur*; but now we meet more and more frequently another type, the *terrible généralisateur*. He tends to turn biology into biologism, sociology into sociologism, and psychology into psychologism.

But let me confine myself to this last phenomenon. Psychologism is frequently combined with something I once called pathologism. That is the tendency to go all out to detect neurotic flaws, and to discover sexual symbols, and so forth. Let me offer two Freudian quotations taken from the book by Fabry, *Logotherapy Applied to Life*. On page 160 he quotes Freud to the effect that parental love is narcissism born again; and friendship is a sublimation of homosexual attitudes. Now Freud himself had been wise and cautious enough to remark once that sometimes a cigar may be a cigar, and nothing but a cigar. However, his epigones are less cautious and feel less inhibited. One of them, a famous Freudian analyst, has recently published a book on Goethe. Let me quote from the review of the book in the *American Journal of Existential Psychiatry*:

In the 1,538 pages the author portrays to us a genius with the earmarks of a manic-depressive, paranoid and epileptoid disorder, of homo-

VIKTOR E. FRANKL is Professor of Psychiatry and Neurology at the University of Vienna and head of the department of neurology at the Vienna Poliklinik. He is the founder of "Logotherapy," on which he has published several books. His paper was presented to an inter-disciplinary conference of scientists, organised by Arthur Koestler, in the Austrian mountain village of Alpbach. The proceedings of the conference published under the title "Beyond Reductionism—New Perspectives in the Life Sciences. The Alpbach Symposium, 1968," edited by Arthur Koestler and J. R. Smythies, by Hutchinson (London), Macmillan (New York) and Molden (Vienna and Munich).

sexuality, incest, voyeurism, exhibitionism, fetishism, impotence, narcissism, obsessive compulsive neurosis, hysteria, megalomania, and so forth. The author seems to focus almost exclusively upon the instinctual dynamic forces that underlie the artistic products. We are led to believe that Goethe's work is but the result of pre-genital fixations. Goethe's struggle does not really aim for an ideal, for beauty, for values, but for the overcoming of an embarrassing problem of premature ejaculation. These volumes show us again that the basic position of psycho-analysis has not really changed....

Small wonder if this state of affairs takes its toll. Only recently Laurin John Hatterer, a Manhattan psycho-analyst, pointed out in a paper that "many an artist has left a psychiatrist's office enraged by interpretations which suggest that he writes because he is an "injustice collector," or a sadomasochist; acts because he is an exhibitionist; dances because he wants to seduce the audience sexually, or paints to overcome a strict bowel training by free smearing...." I could offer you a collection of such examples. I would suggest that the unmasking of motives is justified, perfectly justified, but it must stop where the man who does the unmasking is finally confronted with what is genuine and authentic within a man's psyche. If he does not stop there, what this man is really unmasking is his own cynical attitude, his own nihilistic tendency to devalue and depreciate that which is human in man.

IT IS AN INHERENT TENDENCY in man to reach out for meanings to fulfil, and for values to actualise. But, alas, we are offered by two outstanding American scholars in the field of value psychology the following definitions: "Values and meanings are nothing but defence mechanisms and reaction formations." Well, as for myself, I am not willing to live for the sake of my reaction formations, even less to die for the sake of my own defence mechanisms; and I would argue that reductionism today is a mask for nihilism. Contemporary nihilism no longer brandishes the word nothingness; today nihilism is camouflaged as *nothing-but-ness*. Human phenomena are thus turned into mere epiphenomena. If you allow me a brief digression, I would say that, contrary to a widely-held opinion, existentialism is not to be identified as contemporary nihilism; the true nihilism of today is reductionism. Although Jean-Paul Sartre has put the word *néant* into the title of his main philosophical work, the true message of existentialism is not *nothingness*, but the *no-thingness* of man—that is to say a *human being is no thing*, a person is not one thing among other things.

What is the impact that reductionism might

have, particularly on the young generation? I well remember when I was a pupil, how our science teacher used to walk up and down the class explaining to us that life in its final analysis is nothing but combustion, an oxidation process. In this case reductionism took actually the form of oxidationism. On one occasion I jumped to my feet and asked him: "Dr. Fritz, if this is true, what meaning, then, does life have?" At that time I was twelve. But now imagine what it means that thousands and thousands of young students are exposed to indoctrination along such lines, taught a reductionist concept of man and a reductionist view of life. This situation accentuates a world-wide phenomenon that I consider a major challenge to psychiatry—I have called it the existential vacuum. More and more patients are crowding our clinics and consulting rooms complaining of an inner emptiness, a sense of total and ultimate meaninglessness of their lives. One should not assume that this state of affair is confined to our Western civilisation; some evidence of this has come out in recent publications from behind the Iron Curtain. Thus, for instance, Stanislav Kratochvil, a Czech psychiatrist, has published several papers on the existential vacuum. His contention is that this experience is by no means restricted to the "capitalist countries," but is more and more noticeable today in Eastern Europe as well. I was invited to lecture at the Karl Marx University in Leipzig, and in Czechoslovakia and in Poland. During the question-and-answer-period it transpired again and again that really the same problems are confronting our psychiatric colleagues in Communist countries.

To attempt a short explanation of the causes of this phenomenon, I would contend that, in contrast to animals, man is not told by drives and instincts what he *must* do. Nor, in contrast to man in former times, is he any longer told by traditions and values what he *should* do. Sometimes he does not even know what he basically *wants* to do, but instead he just wants to do what other people are doing—which is conformism. Or else he just does what other people want him to do—which is totalitarianism. But in addition to conformism and totalitarianism we can observe a third side-effect of the existential vacuum, and that is neuroticism. I am referring to a new type of neurosis that I have termed "noogenic neurosis," in heuristic contrast to the conventional type of psychogenic neurosis. And this new type of neurosis—this noogenic neurosis—mainly results from the existential vacuum, from existential frustration.

The director of the psychology laboratory at a U.S. Veterans Administration Hospital, James C. Crumbaugh, has taken some pains in developing a special test, which he calls the PIL-

test, or purpose-in-life test. He has tried it to date on 1,152 subjects. The data have been computerised, and the conclusion that seems to have emerged was that noogenic neurosis is indeed a new type of neurosis that can be differentiated by tests from the conventional types of neurotic illness. There is also agreement between various authors in various countries that about 20% of neuroses today are noogenic by nature and origin.

WE MAY DEFINE the existential vacuum as the frustration of what we may consider to be the most basic motivational force of man, and what we may call, by a deliberate oversimplification, the *will to meaning*—in contrast to the Adlerians' will to power and to the Freudians' will to pleasure. A few days ago Dr. Hyman, a brain surgeon from California, delivered a paper to the Austrian Society of Medical Psychotherapy, of which I am chairman. He said that he was again and again confronted with patients whom he had completely relieved from intractable pain by stereotactic brain surgery, and who then said to him: "Doctor, I am free from pain—but now more than ever I ask myself what the meaning of my life is, because I know that life is transitory, particularly in my situation"—and so on. So people do not (as most current motivational theories seem to assume) care so much for pleasure and avoidance of pain; they do care for meaning.

Let me just add that if you attack my theoretical position by saying that psycho-analysis also recognises something called the reality principle, this doesn't alter the scenery because, according to Freud's own statements, the reality principle is in the indirect service of the pleasure principle. But we could go even a step further by saying that the pleasure principle itself serves a more general principle and this is the homeostasis principle—the principle of tension-reduction on which most of the current motivational theories are still based. Now we have learned long ago from Ludwig von Bertalanffy that the homeostasis principle is no longer tenable as an over-all law within biology; and even more is this the case of psychology.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We are in this respect indebted to Kurt Goldstein's brain pathology, because Goldstein arrived at the conclusion that the homeostasis principle is actually an indication of disease, but not of a normal state. And within psychology we are in this respect indebted mainly to Gordon W. Allport, Charlotte Bühler, and Abraham Maslow.

<sup>2</sup> In therapeutic practice we counteract this hyper-reflection and hyper-intention by the technique of de-reflection, particularly in cases of sexual neuroses.

Now actually the motivational theories that still stick to the homeostasis principle are, by what they imply, true monadologies—they only know a closed system. Man is depicted as a being primarily and basically concerned with his inner equilibrium or something within himself, be it pleasure or anything else. But I dare say that being human is always pointing beyond itself, is always directed at something, or someone, other than itself: be it a meaning to fulfil or another human being to encounter. And actually man is not primarily concerned with pleasure or with the so-called pursuit of happiness. Actually—due to his will to meaning—man is reaching out for a meaning to fulfil or another human being to encounter; and it is this that constitutes a reason to be happy. Whereas, if this normal reaching out for meaning and beings is discarded and replaced by the will to pleasure or the "pursuit of happiness," happiness falters and collapses; in other words, happiness must ensue as a side-effect of meaning-fulfilment. And that is why it cannot be "pursued," because the more we pay attention to happiness, the more we make pleasure the target of our intentions by way of what I call hyper-intention, to the same extent we become victims of hyper-reflection. That is to say, the more attention we pay to happiness or pleasure, the more we block its attainment, and lose sight of the primary reason of our endeavours; happiness vanishes, because we are intending it, and pursuing it. This makes it impossible for fulfilment to ensue; we can observe this phenomenon in about 95% of sexual neuroses. Whenever a male patient is trying deliberately to manifest his potency, or a female patient to demonstrate her ability to experience orgasm, the very attempt is doomed to fail.<sup>2</sup>

Now WHAT HOLDS FOR pleasure and happiness also holds for self-actualisation. Self-actualisation is a good thing; however, we can actualise ourselves only to the extent to which we have fulfilled a meaning, or encountered another human being. But we have no longer any basis for self-actualisation at the moment we are striving directly for it. I would like to epitomise this state of affairs by quoting first Pindar and then Karl Jaspers. Pindar said you should "become what you are." And Jaspers remarked, "What a man is he becomes only through that cause which he has made his own." In other words we may obtain self-actualisation by living out the self-transcendent quality of human existence.

I SHOULD LIKE TO POINT to one aspect of this self-transcendent quality that permeates human existence: the capacity of seeing is de-

pendent on the incapacity of the eye to see itself. The more the eye is incapable of seeing itself or anything within itself, the better is its capacity of sight. To return to reductionism: reductionism is more than just saying time and again that something is *nothing but* something else. It is an approach and procedure that deprives the human phenomena of their very humanness by reducing a human phenomenon in dynamic terms to some sub-human phenomenon, or deducing human phenomena, in genetic terms, from sub-human phenomena. In other words we may well be justified in defining reductionism as, as it were, sub-humanism. Consider the two most definitely human phenomena: love and conscience. They are among the most important and significant human phenomena in so far as love can be defined as the capacity to grasp another human being in its very uniqueness, while conscience is the capacity to seize the unique meaning of a situation; and each situation implies unique meaning. Love, to the reductionist, is derived from sex; it is conceived as a sublimation of sexual instincts or, as Freud once put it, "aim-inhibited" sexuality. Conscience is reduced to the mere super-ego. Both views are erroneous. For if sublimation is to take place, it presupposes the capacity for loving—because ultimately only for the sake of a person whom I love am I capable of integrating my own sexuality into my personality as a whole. If the ego is to integrate its own *id*, it must in the first place be lovingly directed to a Thou. So what is the pre-condition of sublimation cannot be the result of sublimation. As to conscience: if one attempts to reduce conscience to the super-ego, one disregards the fact that conscience often opposes the super-ego, and that conscience often opposes, if need be, the conventions and standards, traditions and values, which are transmitted and channelled by the super-ego. So, if conscience contradicts and opposes the super-ego, if need be, it cannot be identical with the super-ego.

Some years ago, Konrad Lorenz, in a lecture he gave to the Austrian Society of Medical Psychotherapy, spoke about *Moralanaloges Verhalten bei Tieren*, animal behaviour that is analogous to moral behaviour. But what he was stressing were the limitations of the analogy. If one says that a dog that has wetted the floor and slinks under the couch with its tail between its legs is obviously manifesting a bad conscience, this is a naïve error. I would say the dog is manifesting anticipatory anxiety, the fearful expectation of punishment. True conscience has nothing to do with the mere fear of punishment or longing for reward. Those behaviourist psychologists (or whatever they now call themselves) who insist that what is observable in a

man must also be observable in animals, and who wish to derive from this attitude a justification for reductionism or sub-humanism, remind me very much of the rabbi in a Viennese joke. There were two neighbours; one of them contended that the other's cat had stolen and eaten five pounds of his butter; there was a bitter argument and finally they agreed to seek the advice of the rabbi. They went to the rabbi and the owner of the cat said: "It cannot be, my cat doesn't care for butter at all!" But the other insisted that it was indeed his cat, and so the rabbi decided: "Bring me the cat." They brought him the cat and the rabbi said: "Bring me the scales." And they brought the scales and he asked: "How many pounds of butter?" "Five pounds." And believe it or not, the weight of the cat was five pounds. So the rabbi said: "Now I have the butter, but where is the cat?"

This is what these people remind me of who say in fact: there is some type of conscience in the animal as well; so whatever we find in humans may be found in animals as well. And now they ask: we have this behaviour in man—we have these "innate releasing mechanisms" and so forth—but where is man? The humanness of the human phenomena has necessarily disappeared. I have recently come across a book in which man is defined as "nothing but a complex biochemical mechanism powered by a combustion system which energises computers with prodigious storage facilities for retaining encoded information."

I HOPE I won't be misunderstood. As a professor of neurology I agree that it is perfectly legitimate to use the computer as a model for certain activities of the central nervous system. The mistake is exclusively in the phrase "*nothing but*." In a sense, in a way, man *is* a computer; but at the same time he is infinitely more or, let me say, dimensionally more than a computer. If you imagine a cube that is constructed on the basis of a square, you are justified in saying that in a way the cube is also a square. The square is contained and included in the cube. It serves as its foundation and basis. However, if we say the cube is nothing but a square we have then been reducing, removing, shutting out a whole dimension: the third dimension.

In other words, reductionism is a kind of projectionism. It projects human phenomena into a lower dimension. It must be counteracted by what one might call dimensionalism (I have termed it dimensional anthropology) in order to preserve the one-ness and humanness of man in the face of the pluralism of the sciences. Pluralism after all is the nourishing soil on which reductionism flourishes. Dimensional anthropology uses the geometrical concept of dimen-

sions as a model, as an analogy. In other words dimensional anthropology is an *imago hominis*—to allude to Spinoza's ethics, "*ordine geometrico demonstrata*." Dimensional anthropology rests on two laws. The first law as I conceive it, reads as follows:

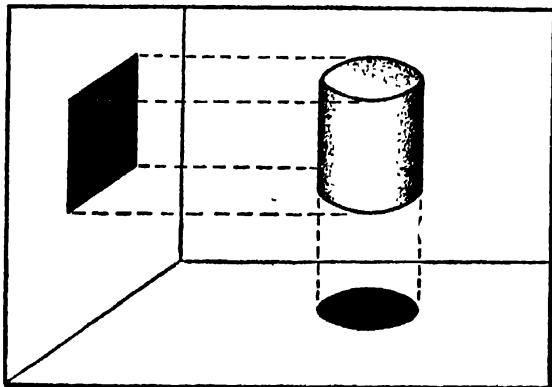


FIG. 1

A phenomenon, say, a cylinder, projected out of its own dimension—i.e., three-dimensional space—down into different dimensions lower than its own, for example into horizontal and vertical planes, yields pictures that are *contradictory* to one another. Here we get a circle and here a rectangle. And this is an evident contradiction. What is more, if you imagine this cylinder to represent a tumbler, an open vessel, the openness of this vessel completely disappears in the projections into the lower dimensions. The circle as well as the rectangle are closed figures rather than open vessels.

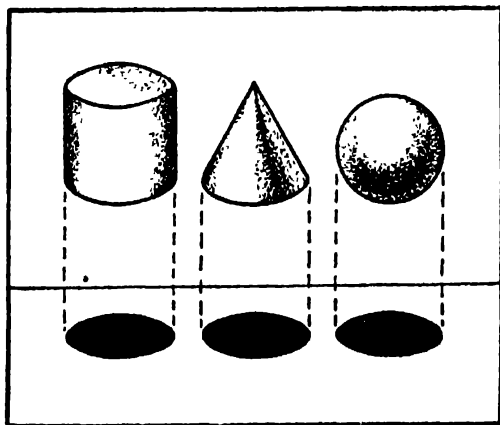


FIG. 2

Second law of dimensional anthropology: different phenomena, e.g., a cylinder, a cone and a sphere, projected out of their own dimension into a dimension lower than their own, result in pictures that are *ambiguous*. The shadows of these different spatial figures are equal, interchangeable, and you can never infer what it is that has cast the shadow.

HOW MAY we benefit from these analogies, from these two laws of dimensional anthropology—in the science of man? If you project a human being into a purely biological frame of reference and/or into the frame of psychology, then in the first case you obtain somatic data, while in the second you obtain psychic data. There is again a contradiction. What seems to be even more important: there was an open vessel and this is depicted as a closed system. Human existence also is characterised by its intrinsic openness: this has been demonstrated by Max Scheler in his anthropology, by Arnold Gehlen, the sociologist, by Adolf Portmann, the zoologist. I referred to this intrinsic openness of human existence by the term "self-transcendent quality": it points beyond itself rather than to being a closed system. We know (thanks to the teachings of von Bertalanffy) that man, even in purely biological terms, is not a closed system either; but in biology, as in psychology, he is of necessity represented as if he were a closed system of physiological reflexes or psychological responses to various stimuli. The openness of human existence, once we have projected man out of his own dimension into a dimension lower than his own, necessarily disappears.

Of course, we are still far from solving the body-mind problem; we are far from bridging this gap between somatic and psychic data. But at least, in the light of dimensional anthropology, these apparent contradictions no longer contradict the oneness of man. The apparent contradiction between the Circle and the Rectangle does not invalidate the fact that they are projections from the same Cylinder. We cannot solve the body-mind problem, but we can at least explain why it is unsolvable. Art has been defined as unity and diversity, and I would suggest that man could be defined as unity in spite of diversity. But the *coincidentia oppositorum* (according to Nicolas of Cues) is lost when we project man out of his own dimension. His unity cannot be found within the lower dimensions; it must be sought in the human dimension. And the same holds for the openness of human existence.

I would like to point out that whenever I speak of "higher" and "lower" dimensions, this does not imply any value judgment. The higher dimension includes the lower dimensions. By the same token the sound and sober findings in any lower dimension are not invalidated by the dimensional concept of man. Freudian psycho-analysis, Watsonian or Skinnerian behaviourism, Pavlovian reflexology, Adlerian individual psychology—though they may neglect the human dimension as such, need not contradict it. Seen in the light of dimensional anthropology, however, they have to be

re-interpreted, re-evaluated. In other words, these findings have to be re-humanised.

IT IS NOT ONLY the privilege of the scientist, it is also his duty to embark on such projective measures and procedures. It is his responsibility to deal with reality as if reality were uni-dimensional; to neglect the multi-dimensionality inherent in reality. However, the scientist should also remain aware of the pitfalls of his method; he should be aware of the second law of dimensional anthropology. Let me offer you an example out of my own field of research. Replace the three shadows by neuroses. I have briefly referred to the evidence that there are not only conventional psychogenic neuroses, but also somatogenic neuroses. There are agoraphobias that are due to hyperthyroidism (*i.e.*, a hyperfunction of the thyroid gland), and there are cases of claustrophobia that can be traced back to tetanoid disturbances of metabolism. There are depersonalisation states that could be understood and therapeutically dealt with as hypofunctions of the adrenocortical glands. But there are not only somatogenic and psychogenic neuroses; there are also those noogenic neuroses I mentioned before: neuroses which cannot be traced to oedipal situations, or maladjustments and so forth, but which derive from spiritual problems, from moral conflicts, from conflicts between one's true conscience and the mere super-ego; and lastly, from existential frustration, from the despair of man over the apparent meaninglessness of his life. The etiology of a neurosis is multi-dimensional. A neurosis might be somatogenic, psychogenic, or noogenic. And to the extent to which the causation of a neurosis is multi-dimensional, to the same extent its pathology is ambiguous—much the same way as the shadow, of which you could not tell whether it was cast by a cylinder or a cone or a sphere. Similarly, as long as you confine yourself to the plane of pure psychiatry you are unable to distinguish diagnostically between what is ultimately either hyperthyroidism, or castration fear, or else the existential despair of an individual over the seeming meaninglessness of his life. Pathology is ambiguous in that the *logos* of *pathos*, the meaning of suffering, may hide in a dimension different from the dimension in which symptomatology dwells. If the meaning of suffering is to be understood, we have to transcend the level of mere symptoms, the plane of pure psychiatry.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy* (Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1964), and Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul: From Psychotherapy to Logotherapy* (Souvenir Press, London, 1969).

What holds for theory also holds for therapy. A few years ago, at a Montreal meeting on psychopharmacology, several speakers expressed their apprehension that by introducing drug treatment in addition to shock treatment, psychiatry might become dehumanised and the patient himself depersonalised. In my department at the Vienna Polyclinic, we use drugs, and use electro-convulsive treatment. I have signed authorisations for lobotomies without having cause to regret it. In a few cases, I have even carried out transorbital lobotomy. However, I promise you that the human dignity of our patients is not violated in this way. On the other hand I do know psychotherapists who would abhor giving a prescription for a drug, or giving shots or shocks, and yet by their depersonalising approach to the patient, based on a reductionist picture of man, violate the human dignity of their patients.

What matters is not a technique or therapeutic approach as such, be it drug treatment or shock treatment, but the spirit in which it is being carried out. Professor Petrilowitsch (at present head of the Psychiatric University Clinic in Mainz) has recently pointed out that logotherapy,<sup>3</sup> in contrast to all other schools of psychotherapy, transcends the dimension of neurosis itself. In psycho-analytic therapy, there is a pathogenic kind of psychodynamics which the therapist tries to counteract, by means of (say) a transference relationship. And if you think of so-called behaviour therapy—or reflexological therapy (think of Eysenck, Wolpe and others), there the neurosis is considered to be the outcome of pathogenic conditioning processes and, accordingly, is dealt with by introducing re-conditioning processes: progressive desensitisation and the like. But all these therapies remain in the plane of the neurosis itself. Logotherapy, on the other hand, transcends this plane; it follows man into the specific dimension of his humanness, and taps resources available in that dimension such as intrinsically human potentials of self-transcendence and self-detachment.

I HAVE MENTIONED BEFORE that suffering is ambiguous in so far as its meaning may be localised in a dimension higher than the suffering itself. This leads to the question whether the human dimension is the ultimate, the final dimension. Instead of theorising on this problem, let me just report what happened in my hospital when I once stepped into the room where one of my assistants was conducting a group therapeutic session. He had to deal with, among other people, a woman who had tried to commit suicide and was under therapeutic treatment. She had lost a son of 11 years of age, and



she was in clear rebellion against her fate. I decided to participate in the group session and asked a question directed at the whole group: "Imagine an ape that is punctured, again and again, in order to manufacture an antipoliomyelitis serum. Is it possible that this ape could ever understand the purpose of its pain? . . ." The group of simple women responded by saying that this was sheer impossibility—because the purpose of inflicting this pain was located in a higher dimension, in the world of man, and an ape is not capable of reaching out into this dimension. Then I asked: "What about the human world? Are you absolutely sure that it is the last dimension, a terminal in the cosmos as it were, that there is no dimension beyond the human world, a dimension in which the ultimate meaning of our human sufferings would be understandable? But then we too have no access to this higher dimension. . . ." There was general agreement.

This question of course cannot be answered by either doctor or scientist. It must be left open. As a psychiatrist I must leave it to the patient to answer the ultimate question as to the ultimate meaning of suffering. The same holds for us here: I raise a question, but I must leave it open. This is all the more indicated as the answer to the question about the ultimate meaning of human existence can never be given intellectually, but only existentially: not in words, but by our life, by our whole existence.

## Discussion

KETY:<sup>1</sup> Well, I would certainly heartily agree with Dr. Frankl regarding his comment on reductionism. In a paper that I wrote in 1961 called "A Biologist Examines the Mind and Behaviour" I took issue with reductionism of mind to matter and reductionism of behaviour to biological events, without paying regard to the informational storage of the human being. Reductionism is an unsound hypothesis. The techniques upon which reductionism is based are not necessarily unsound—only the extrapolation from them which certain people indulge in. And I thought that Dr. Frankl came dangerously close to a denial of appropriate scientific techniques in his comments on reductionism. I was glad that in his

discussion of the projection of the cylinder he finally came round to stating that the projections in different planes were not contradictory—they were only contradictory to the most naïve kind of examination. They were complementary, if one took into account the plane of projection, the manner in which it was obtained, and so on; but I think Dr. Frankl came to the same conclusion himself at the very end. Certainly science has analytical techniques which are reliable, provided we take into account that these give us only one segment of the picture. We must put these together; we must try to fill in the gaps which the analytical technique necessarily introduces—indirect techniques—and of course we must never draw inappropriate conclusions from the analytical techniques to the extent or to the conclusion that the cylinder is a circle or is a rectangle.

FRANKL: What you have said sums up what I have tried to convey when I said that the pictures are contradictory to the naïve mind, since it is the naïve mind that is in need of the re-evaluating, the re-interpreting. I explicitly said that it is not only the privilege, but even the responsibility of the scientist to embark on reductions, *i.e.*, projections; but he must remain aware of what he is doing. For some years I have given three lectures a day, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., the first on neurology, the second on psychiatry, the third on psychotherapy. In the first lecture I sometimes discussed a patient in a reductionist manner: if it was a case of brain tumour, I had to check and examine the reflexes, I treated him as if he were a closed system of reactions and responses. In the second lecture I discussed psychogenic neuroses; and in the third lecture the first patient was discussed again, but as a human being—a person whose human dimension I had to shut out while examining him neurologically.

INHEDLER:<sup>2</sup> I know that in many countries psychiatrists are alarmed about the feeling of existential emptiness, mostly in the younger generation. I wonder, however, if you have found out whether this same feeling is shared by science students and research workers in the exact sciences, such as mathematicians, physicians, biologists and experimental psychologists; in other words by all those who are seeking a small part of the truth concerning the laws which govern the universe of our human conduct. If students today experience this feeling of emptiness, is it not because we who teach them do not sufficiently convey our enthusiasm and our faith in scientific research? Is this, in your opinion, a widespread sociological phenomenon or is it more common in specific sections of society?

<sup>1</sup>Seymour S. Kety, Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard University.

<sup>2</sup>Bärbel Inhelder, Professor of Developmental Psychology, University of Geneva.



FRANKL: I would go even further and contend that the existential vacuum is in a way a contagious disease, because the existential vacuum in the youngsters is reinforced by the existential vacuum they sense in their teachers. But you must distinguish between two generations of professors. The older professors often still have their idealism and enthusiasm, although it is some old-fashioned type; but to the youngsters this is preferable to the emptiness of the younger professors, those between 30 and 40. This is a remarkable fact. I have recently been lecturing at ten different universities within the United States alone, and also at universities in Australia, South America, Africa, Japan and Israel. I can only speak of my impressions.

But once I did some statistical research among my students. Forty per cent of the Swiss, West German, and Austrian students confessed that they knew from their own experiences of an existential vacuum, this inner void and emptiness. Among my American students, however, the percentage was not 40, but 81%. At least partially, I think, this might be traced to reductionism, which is more prevalent, I find, on the campuses of American universities than in central European universities.

HAYEK:<sup>3</sup> Would you agree, then, that the students revolt because the professors are too young? [Laughter.]

FRANKL: No, the student rebellions are evidently connected with the fact that they are offered no meanings; and this is again partially due to the subjectivism that permeates most of the theories on meaning and values. I believe that meanings are objective, but this is not merely a personal philosophical conviction on my part, it is the result of psychological experimentation. May I remind you that Max Wertheimer, one of the founders of *Gestalt* psychology, once said that each situation implies a certain quality of "requiredness," and this, he explicitly said, is an objective quality. I would say that, in contrast to those values and traditions that today are evidently on the wane, we should not forget the meanings—life can still be meaningful, in spite of the crumbling and vanishing of traditions, due to the simple fact that this crumbling only affects the values, but spares the meanings. The values are universals, I would say, while the meanings are always unique, pertaining to unique life situations, and to the unique person who is engaged and entangled therein.

<sup>3</sup> Friedrich A. Hayek, Professor of Economics, University of Freiburg.

<sup>4</sup> C. H. Waddington, Professor and Chairman, Department of Genetics, University of Edinburgh.

What we call the phenomenological approach seems to me to be a methodological attempt to analyse the immediate data of experience of the man in the street, and to translate these experiences into scientific terms. Then we find that there are three principal ways of finding meaning in life, even in the most adverse conditions. The man in the street will teach you, if you analyse him adequately, that life can be meaningful by a deed we are doing, or by experiencing what is good or beautiful or true in the world; but, if need be, also by the way in which a man shoulders his unavoidable, unchangeable fate in a heroic way, thereby transmuting and turning tragedy into triumph. The man in the street is fully aware, although on a non-verbal level, that this is possible, and if time would allow, I could offer you evidence—drawn not from philosophers, but from utterances of prisoners in California's ill-famed San Quentin Prison—who were confronted with the gas chamber. I have visited them, and talked to them. Well, these people may teach us what's going on in a man who is setting out on a valuing process. Man does not originally interpret himself, say, as a battleground of civil war among id, ego, and super-ego. But the man in the street has a basic self-understanding and interprets his own existence as being involved in situations that constitute a challenge, situations that "mean" something to him; anyhow he feels that he has to try hard to do his best, to seek out, to smell out, to sort out the meanings. And if you systematise this knowledge drawn from the man in the street, you arrive at a phenomenological analysis of the "valuing experience" in the sense of "finding meaning."

WADDINGTON:<sup>4</sup> I want to make two remarks which are both footnotes to what has been said already by Dr. Frankl and Dr. Kety.

Firstly, the reductionism, by which you lose dimensionality when you project into a lower dimension, operates throughout the whole of science, not only when you go from the human to the sub-human world but when you go from any level of organisation to any lower one. It operates most drastically when you go from the existent world to any sort of conceptualisation. The existent world is obviously of infinite dimensions. You can never exhaust its content by concepts, otherwise you would only have to think of those concepts to re-create it. There is therefore a very extensive loss of dimensionality at that point when you pass from existence to concept; but whenever you go from one level of discourse to a more abstract one you lose dimensionality.

For instance, until a short time ago, chemists operating within the world of chemistry—which you might say is a fairly reductionist one—used a concept of valency. Now this concept could not be included in the still more reductionist world of discourse of physics until Heitler and London much later worked out some appropriate quantum-mechanical equations which make it possible to give a satisfactory physical explanation of valency. Before that, however, chemists were employing a concept which was absolutely essential to deal with relations within their field of discourse, but which became lost when one made a further step into the still more reductionist field of physics. This is an example which shows that the loss of content on reducing to a lower level is general throughout the world of science, and not only characteristic of biology.

I should like to develop this theme a little more, into two further points about possible recipes we might follow in dealing with the situation. Consider first the situation when you remain with your concrete multi-dimensional world, say within your human world, without descending to any lower level. Now it does not at all follow that you necessarily realise what the human world is. You have to develop capacities to discover the full richness that exists within that world. Consider the example of the cup which was projected on to a surface and appeared as a rectangle. What I am saying is that it is a problem to discover that it is a cup. This calls for a very definite effort to explore the full complexities and subtleties of the non-reduced world. Certainly that is one of the major tasks of any science—the task which one could describe in general terms as “the attempt to discover what are the interesting questions.” Discovering the questions depends on becoming aware of the things that you can ask questions about.

Complementary to this is the attempt to improve your methods of projection into a lower dimensionality. Take again the analogy of the projection of the cup. When projected by light it showed a rectangular shadow or a circular shadow. If, however, you had projected it by X-rays it would have shown a rectangular shadow with a darkened edge, or a circular shadow with a darkened edge. You would have got much nearer to expressing its cup-ness by improving the methods of projection. When the chemists' valencies were adequately translated into physics, this could be regarded as an improvement in the method of projecting from the chemists' dimensions into the physicist's dimensions.

The other point I wanted to make was quite a different one, dealing, from the point of view

of a genetic biologist, with this feeling—what did you call it?—this “will to meaning.” One of the most important defining characteristics of man is that he is involved in the cultural transmission of information, that is to say that he can pass on things from generation to generation, not only through the *DNA* in his chromosomes, but also by symbolic communication. I think that to the genetic biologist the major thing that distinguishes mankind from other animals is that man has developed symbolic communication so much further than even the cleverest bird. If this is so, then we may say that the very definition of man involves the idea of meaningful symbols. I don't think you could apply the concept of meaning to any sub-human species. It seems to me therefore that a real drive for meaning is something you would have to expect as a fundamental aspect of human nature. Of course the sort of meaning Frankl is talking about—the meaning of life in general—is a very highly developed form of meaning compared to the meaning of symbols. You can have people who can communicate symbolically through speech or writing, without necessarily having any idea of the meaning of life in general. However, I wanted to make the point that it seems to me that the idea of meaning is an almost necessary part of the definition of the human species.

FRANKL: I think we agree that we may call a man a reductionist only if he makes projections, in a scientific way, but is not aware of what he is doing. This is what I explicitly said. But if you asked me for a remedy, I would again say that we should take the lesson of stereoscopic vision, *i.e.*, we should not mind apparent contradictions, but embark on a stereoscopic style of research. I mean multi-dimensional approaches, as they are carried out in interdisciplinary research. But in addition I would say that we should also learn from Edmund Husserl and Max Scheler: from the message offered by phenomenology. Phenomenology interprets itself as the *Verzicht*, the renunciation of any preconceived patterns of interpretation of given phenomena. For instance, a preconceived pattern of interpretation is established the moment you lie down on the couch of a Freudian analyst and he sets out to interpret in “psychodynamic” terms, whatever you are saying. Even if you are inhibited or silent this is the expression of certain “psychodynamics.” But this is precisely the same *a priorism* as the preconceived conviction on the part of the rabbi: “If there are five pounds it must be butter—so where is the cat?”... As Aaron Ungersma, a professor at San Anselmo, California, said in his book on Logotherapy: “Freud's motivational theory is

valid for the child that is out to get pleasure. Adler's will to power concept is valid for the adolescent who strives for power, while Frankl's will to meaning concept is valid for the adult, the mature individual..." However, the will to meaning might still be the basic human motivation, although in the first decade of life it does not as a rule manifest itself.

**SMYTHIES:**<sup>5</sup> I would like to reply to Dr. Frankl's point of view as a clinical psychiatrist, and I certainly confirm his clinical statement about people coming to the clinic suffering from the vacuum of meaning. But I think we should think about the other causes of neurosis which one sees today and the curious way in which they are changing. Now you can read all the famous psychiatrists—Freud, Jung, Adler, *et al.*, and you get the impression that they are describing natural laws, *i.e.*, that neuroses are due to certain causes, and these causes operate at all times and at all places for all men. But clearly the causes of neuroses which bring the patients to our clinics are in a very real sense culturally dependent. If you apply Freud's basic law of repression: what is repressed causes neurosis afterwards—I think no one would dispute that. But what is repressed is what the culture disapproves of. Now different cultures disapprove of different things, so in different cultures you get different things repressed. In Freud's Vienna of 1890, for example, sexual matters were taboo, therefore sexual matters were repressed and so Freudian psychology came to be based on a whole gamut of repressed sexual conflicts, which are presented as the cause of neurosis. As for Arthur Koestler's "paranoid streak"—I don't mean *Arthur's* paranoid streak [Laughter]—he speaks of a universal paranoia: now somebody might suggest that in all cases and all types and all lands in every possible world, paranoia is caused by repressed homosexuality. But nowadays, seventy years after Freud, the whole cultural climate in sexual matters has changed; sex is no longer taboo; and this came about largely as a result of Freud's own teachings. Thus one could imagine a society in which homosexuality was not in any way something bad, and therefore did not have to be repressed. In ancient Greece, homosexuality was perfectly accepted, and some of the leading people in the Theban army were homosexuals, and this was regarded as perfectly normal. Therefore if it did not have to be repressed, it could not be the cause of paranoia.

<sup>5</sup> J. R. Smythies, Reader in Psychiatry, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>6</sup> Paul A. Weiss, Professor, Rockefeller University, New York.

But unfortunately, human psychology being what it is, once one taboo is overthrown, another one grows up in its place. And we have other taboos at the moment.

Sex has been taken away as a taboo, but now one of the main ones which has taken its place and which fulfils the same neurosis-generating function is the concept of Death. Every culture has a particular complex cultural machinery for dealing with death and dying. I am not so much talking about the concern of one's own death, but about the effect of death on the person who has been left behind. The forms that bereavement take vary from the Irish wake, where death is regarded as being a transition to a happier world, to our taboos on death. In the wake the party is a great event, a two-day-long party, with plenty of singing and dancing—a very effective way of dealing with grief and bereavement.

It is extraordinary that the first serious scientific paper on the subject did not appear until 1941 when Eric Lindemann at Harvard wrote his famous paper on the analysis of Grief Reaction. He studied the victims of the Coconut Grove fire in Boston. Two hundred people were burnt to death in a nightclub fire—and he went round to interview the relatives of the people who had been killed; and wrote the first scientific account in Western science of what the grief reaction is and what aberrations it could form. Now as our Judaeo-Christian basis for ideology progressively decays, the support it was able to give to the people left behind in bereavement likewise vanishes. If the dead person is thought to have gone to a happier world, then this is a support to the patient. But nowadays this belief has very largely decayed and one commonly sees more and more of the patients coming to the clinic suffering from Lindemann's grief reaction. We have no culturally valid method for dealing with the death of loved ones, and this leads them to their state of loss of meaning. The meaning of their life has been lost, the meaning that was invested in somebody else, and no other course of the meaning has arisen. These abnormal grief reactions can last for months or years and are very crippling—the person is often psychologically completely crippled. This is an example of another cause of neurosis which supports in general terms your particular view; it expresses your idea of "loss of meaning" looked at from another aspect, a very personal one.

**WEISS:**<sup>6</sup> I want to say something about the university unrests. I have seen some of these incidents in Milan; we had them in Columbia; I know something about Frankfurt. We've made some investigations that are not yet completed,

but it was quite characteristic that the shock troops among the student activists came almost exclusively from the departments of the humanities and sociology. There were hardly any scientists among them.

HAYEK: What Paul Weiss just said rather confirms the half-joking suggestion I made before. But it is not the humanities in general—for instance the classics—which provide the revolutionaries. It's a few subjects like sociology and political science where the professors *are* very young. [Laughter.]

WADDINGTON: I want to bring together a statement by Dr. Frankl and another by Dr. Smythies, and in this connection raise the point whether we are not perhaps treating this subject on a too professional level. Dr. Frankl said that he comes across neuroses based on the frustrated search for meaning and the inability to find meaning. Smythies says that you cannot have a neurosis unless a culture actively represses some natural tendency and prevents you from getting satisfaction for a particular drive or motivation. Do not these two statements taken together mean that our present society is actively repressing the search for meaning? It is not merely that there are naive reductionists who are not clever enough to see that theirs is a too simple reductionism, but there are actually some forms of social activity which are, as it were, positively frustrating the search for meaning—making meaning into a dirty word.

Personally I am quite ready to be persuaded that the present social intellectual system of the West does repress the search for meaning and tends to regard meaning as a dirty word. Certainly in the last couple of decades people have hardly dared to use the word "progress," which implies positive values. You can hardly talk in intellectual company of the meaning of progress, it has become a dirtier word than sex. Now why should this be so? And if it is so—and I think that the existence of neurosis on this basis is ample evidence that it is—then it seems to me that this is something much more difficult and important to deal with than the possibility that there are some silly reductionists about who don't understand.

KOESTLER: I am very glad that Frankl's was the last presentation on our programme, be-

cause the real, the underlying subject of the conference was the rejection of this crude type of reductionism, and the selection of the participants was guided by this consideration. Now Frankl has stated what was implied throughout our proceedings, even in the most technical papers, and stated it in a very explicit and forceful manner. It was very useful, I think, to cut closer to the bone of what naive or gross reductionism means, and how far on the other hand reductionism is legitimate as an analytical technique in the solution of limited technical problems. But as you have pointed out, when we speak of "naive" reductionism, then we have to include among the naives even men like Sigmund Freud; and quite a number of heavyweights in the various sciences still adhere to this type of reductionism.

When you ask, however, for an alternative view, for instance in the field of psychology, then I have the feeling that one is caught between Scylla and Charybdis: one rejects the Behaviourists and the Freudians, but where is the alternative? Of course you have the same situation in biology. If you reject the gross mechanism derived from nineteenth century classical physics, classical vitalism is certainly no alternative.

It is difficult to talk of intangibles. I am glad that you felt that in these few days a few bridges of understanding have been built, and a certain integration has taken place. The symposium was intended as a meeting of people in the mainstream of research,<sup>7</sup> specialists in their fields and in their experimental laboratories, who nevertheless feel—to quote John Donne—a "holy discontent" with the *Zeitgeist* and its reductionist "nothing but" attitude. That was to be the common denominator, admittedly a negative one, but it seems to have worked out quite well. Everybody has of course his own formulation for his holy discontent. To give my own tentative formulation—the rejection of what I call "the four pillars of unwisdom"—in a simplified form, the four pillars to me are the doctrines:

1. that biological evolution is the result of nothing but random mutations preserved by natural selection;

2. that mental evolution is the result of nothing but random tries preserved by reinforcements;

3. that all organisms, including man, are nothing but passive automata controlled by the environment, whose sole purpose in life is the reduction of tensions by adaptive responses;

4. that the only scientific method worth that name is quantitative measurement; and, consequently, that complex phenomena must be reduced to simple elements accessible to such treatment, without undue worry whether the specific characteristic of a complex phenomenon, for instance man, may be lost in the process.

<sup>7</sup> Other participants in the Alpbach Symposium who did not take part in this discussion were Jerome and Blanche Bruner (Harvard), Holger Hyden (Göteborg), Paul MacLean (Bethesda), David McNeill (Harvard), Ludwig von Bertalanffy (New York State University), W. H. Thorpe (Cambridge).

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## NOTES & TOPICS

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# The Unnatural History of Human Aggression

*On Learning from the Birds & the Bees — By KATHLEEN NOTT*

EVEN IF WE are not silly about them in a British way, animals *are* fabulous. Most people, from infancy, like hearing stories about them or reading about them or, now, stalking them in their habitats and haunts, with the maximum of security and comfort, vicariously behind someone's telephoto lens. These days we find ourselves repeating (but with the reassuring corroboration of science and technology) our willing acceptance, first acquired through Aesop and La Fontaine, that animals are nicer, generally wiser and cleverer and, on their own levels of adaptation, more successful than we are. Fables, of course, are very unnatural history—they simply moralise about us and for us.

Ethology, the study of animal behaviour, is one of the newer sciences, and one of the most fascinating to the general reader or student. Humanly and socially, it may be one of the more valuable, if for no other reason, because of the conditions of its field-work. As a

"humane" exercise, without interference or exploitation, it can be morally reassuring at least about science and scientists. In psychological effect it therefore compares favourably with the other sciences of life, busier with cracking codes and reading entrails and other parts of organisms. Not only with the modern popular naturalists—the Gavin Maxwells, the Gerald Durrells—but even the more strictly professional Konrad Lorenz, it is often difficult to decide which is the owner and which is the pet. To stalk the fawnlike and apparently wild and solitary Jane Goodall on her gentle excursions—provided that we can forget the photographer by whom she in her turn is being stalked—is to begin to realise our oneness with all species and the occasional superiorities of the animal primates.

But it may be that the study of animals is too fabulous. Ethology has been more urgently and rapidly popularised than most new sciences just because the animals are being made to tell us more than they can about ourselves.

<sup>1</sup> *The Territorial Imperative*. By Robert Ardrey. Collins, 36s. *The Parable of the Beast*. By John Bleibtreu. Gollancz, 45s. *The Ghost in the Machine*. By Arthur Koestler. Hutchinson, 42s. *On Aggression*. By Konrad Lorenz. Methuen, 30s. *Human Aggression*. By Anthony Storr. Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 25s.

<sup>2</sup> N. Tinbergen is regarded by many (notably by Ardrey) as, with Lorenz, a Founding Father of ethology. He can compare with Lorenz in observational empathy (see *The Herring Gull's World*, 1953) and as a scientist he is certainly not less rigid. Tinbergen also draws human conclusions from the study of animals. But the application has not been pressed to the extent we find in these very recent authors for whom it appears to be their overriding concern. The difference may be because a decade or so ago the science, as Tinbergen himself says, was only in its infancy. But the application which these authors make is potentially present in Tinbergen. (I have read only those works which have been translated into English.) In his English works he appears as psychologically a Behaviourist, who takes a strongly evolutionary line about human beings. (See "The Evolution of Behaviour" in *The Study of Instinct*, 1951).

ALL BUT ONE of the recent books which I want to discuss<sup>1</sup> are written by amateurs in the ethological field; but they all know their subject, and "amateur" is no adverse reflection. It has been justly pointed out by John Bleibtreu that Konrad Lorenz, the only practising ethologist among them, benefits from a certain lack of over-specialised academic education in his field, and has thus preserved his "innocent eye" for himself and us.

All these advantages being granted it still seems possible that anguish about our human species and its not-improbable extermination has given too much haste and drive to new generalisations about ourselves, about our "human nature" and its place in evolutionary creation. Here and there, at least, one or two of these recent contributors seem to jump to dramatic conclusions like a kangaroo with a rocket in its tail—I can think of no more representative and comprehensive symbol than that.

The authors I am comparing are: Robert Ardrey, John Bleibtreu, Arthur Koestler, Konrad Lorenz, and Anthony Storr.<sup>2</sup>

Storr is the only professional psychologist among them, and he already feels able to draw "human" conclusions applicable from current ethological findings. Koestler is in a special position as an anti-behaviourist who yet retains little hope for a radical contribution of a personal and individual kind towards preserving our species. He appears to accept ethological findings but erects his pessimism about our nature and our prospects rather on a special misfortune or kink in human evolution, the conflict between our old brain and our new.

Nevertheless, whatever their other interests, qualifications, or motives, they share a common acceptance that "aggression" is an instinctual or an inherent characteristic of animal nature, including our own. Moreover, it has clearly served an evolutionary purpose, protecting and preserving species by the selection of stronger and more able strains. Thus, natural, ineradicable, and valuable, it ought not to be repressed or distorted in ourselves. They agree, more or less, that frustration of other positive instincts or drives plays an insignificant part in the genesis of aggression. (This contradicts a whole school of psychological and educational thinking which in our own day has been predominantly influential.) But the frustration of the conative instinct of aggression itself may cause its distortion and exaggeration. They are in accord that aggression is a good and natural thing; a notable proportion of our troubles in human society arise from our failure or refusal to accept this healthy instinct. This is our proper continuity with animal species. They also collectively admit that in human conditions you can have too much of this good thing, or rather that human society has so far distinguished itself from successful animal communities by its failure or weakness in containing aggressiveness and channelling it in fruitful directions.

ONE OR TWO QUOTATIONS from Lorenz can fairly represent this summary of the conclusions which are held in common.

The subject of this book... is the fighting instinct of beast and man which is directed against members of the same species... [and one of its purposes is to dispose]... of certain inner obstacles which prevent many people from seeing themselves as part of the universe and recognising that their own behaviour too obeys the laws of nature.

... All the cases described... in which animals of different species fight against each other, have one thing in common; every one of the fighters gains an obvious advantage by its behaviour or, at least, in the interests of preserving the species, it "ought to" gain one. But intra-specific aggres-

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sion, aggression in the proper and narrower sense of the word, also fulfils a species-preserving function. . . .

Although not the only one, "territorialism" is according to Lorenz the most important need that aggression intra-specific and inter-specific serves and fosters.

As an awful warning of what may happen through "damming . . . the aggression which under natural conditions would be vented on hostile territorial neighbours" we are offered the aquarium cichlids. A cichlid sexual pair will remain "happily united" as long as there are some young fish in the tank to bully. But if "the humane aquarium keeper . . . removes the fugitives and leaves the couple in sole possession of the tank . . . after a few days he sees, to his horror, that the female is floating dead on the surface, torn to ribbons, while there is nothing more to be seen of [their] eggs and their young." Thus Lorenz illustrates that . . . the aggressive drive is

[not] . . . merely a reaction to certain external factors, as many sociologists and psychologists maintain. . . . The completely erroneous view that animal and human behaviour is predominantly reactive and that, even if it contains any innate elements at all, it can be altered to an unlimited extent, comes from a radical misunderstanding of certain democratic principles; it is utterly at variance with these principles to admit that human beings are not born equal and that not all have equal chances of becoming ideal citizens.

To those who take the "reactive" view of aggression, "external factors" include deprivation of love and over-restriction. Lorenz says, with some justification, that the result of an extremely permissive "American method of upbringing . . . based on these surmises (sparing all disappointments) . . . were countless rude children who were anything but non-aggressive."

Animal communities, on the other hand, have dealt with intra-specific aggression by pecking order and other hierarchical methods (or "chains of command"). Aggression, one may hazard, is a good thing but it is better for some than for others. It makes for social forms which require recipients or some kind of ordered subjection.

These quotations and references, then, present the common foundation in these authors. So far they take their lead from Lorenz that aggression is an instinct and that it is valuable, on balance, because it helps to preserve species and communities. But because in unfavourable conditions it can become destructive and even inter-

necine, it needs some kind of containment; education or treatment.

BEYOND THAT common ground, there are signs of some divergence. It would be nice to be able to say that every little boy and girl born into the world alive (including our authors) is either a little Darwinian or a little Lamarckian; but it would be a gross over-simplification. Sir Julian Huxley, for instance, is a neo-Darwinian, and has a strong faith in a moral advance of the species depending on our unique capacity for conceptual thought and analysis; he relies not only on our ability to cooperate with one another but on our learning to acquire new forms of cooperation. But the issue does not seem to have received final scientific settlement. How to interpret "struggle for existence" and hereditary conditioning, on the one hand, and, on the other, cooperation and environmental educability? These varying integrations can

### Predatory Man

*TODAY, books advancing the thesis that man is a predatory aggressor by nature are welcomed and acclaimed by the intellectual community. In spite of the fashionable anthropology of our day, which identifies him as a predatory beast, it seems to me clear that man, in his evolution, has already made noticeable progress in rising above the level of his pre-human ancestors.*

*This is a view for which abundant evidence could be adduced, but it is not a view that can gain a hearing today because it is so unwelcome to those who represent the intellectual fashions of our day. If I should write a book showing that man, like the great carnivores, is predatory by his unchangeable nature, I could be sure that it would be widely read and acclaimed. But if I wrote a book that took an optimistic and teleological view of man's evolution, regarding it as an ascent from the level of the beasts to something ethically and spiritually higher, it would hardly be well received and few would read it. The burden of living up to a high standard is something men can do without. I do not think that this situation will change in what remains of this century, for we seem to be in one of those long periods when civilisation, in decline, produces the kind of thinking appropriate to such decline. But if the Phoenix ever rises again, its rise will be accompanied by the general optimism that periods of progress always produce.*

LOUIS J. HALLE, in *The New Republic*

at least be classified as a particular philosophical outlook, even as an "ideology," and hence partly determined by temperament.

One can go further and see this divergence as part of a tradition of ideological dichotomy which is much wider and older than the limited question: How we are to reconcile two sets of biological observations which often seem conflicting—those which describe "our animal heritage" and others which refer to certain civilised characteristics commonly regarded as unique to the human species.

The traditional and temperamental opposition can also be described in terms which are more proper to theology, but they do have a real psychological meaning—Original Sin *v.* Original Virtue—Predestination *v.* Grace—Augustinian determinism *v.* Pelagian Free Will.

ROBERT ARDREY, originally a playwright, has a fine dramatic and racy rhetoric which disguises, and might have deflected him from, his true vocation. Behind it we can hear a Scottish minister's awful warnings of that retributive Judgment Day which, in spite of his exhortations and threats we can do little to avoid. According to Ardrey, the "territorial imperative," Nature's absolute command to defend our borders at all cost, is our most fundamental instinct.<sup>3</sup> Nature has also provided us, in common with the rest of the animal creation, with the aggression and the reserves of aggression which we need to try and fulfil this natural behest. The invader of a home or a homeland is always at an incalculable disadvantage. He does not know (or more usually is unwilling to take into account) the force of the instinct which his intrusion is going to arouse. Hence some deductions about the Battle of Britain,

<sup>3</sup> This has led many journalists to simple-minded conclusions. As Mr. C. L. Sulzberger has written in the *New York Times* (14 October 1968), "Modern anthropology teaches that nationalism and imperialism are deeply rooted in our animal pasts, and, perhaps like our own, the foreign policy of the Kremlin may sometimes derive from remote instincts first noted among wolves, horned owls or lions patrolling their preserves for sustenance."

This tendency to regard particular areas possessively is called a "territorial imperative" and was essential to the early proto-men on the high African savannah. Its legacy may be significant in analysing contemporary social systems. . . . But his own conclusion, in analysing the specific case of Russian political aggression in Czechoslovakia, neatly reverses the original thesis, e.g., "it is unlikely that any Kremlin government will be persuaded for years to come that any but openly pro-Soviet régimes shall be permitted to endure in Eastern Europe. Russian doctrine sees control of this territory as imperative. . . ."



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about Pearl Harbour, the Israeli-Arab wars, and Viet Nam, which may be plausible, although we may not all regard them as exactly parallel. (In the case of Battle of Britain, for instance, there is something to be said for the explanation that, as it happened, the British *could* defend the territory, islands being still of some strategic use, and that, on a quite rational basis, there simply wasn't anything else for us to do.)

What matters here is that Ardrey would like to account for everything—not only defence and war but the energy which creates civilisation and culture—in terms of the aggressive territorial instinct. He allows little if anything to humane and positive feeling, to good will or disinterestedness. We need an external enemy, whether natural or man-made, to force us into the minimal cooperation for achieving anything at all. And he has an equation for this: "The amity . . . which an animal expresses for others of its kind will be equal to the sum of the forces of enmity and hazard which are arrayed against it."

Obvious corollaries are the failure of "Geneva," symbolic of a world-wide failure of mind in recognising its instinctive springs; and this means also the total failure of the Rousseauism that Geneva stands for. The prognostic conclusion which he is not afraid to draw prescribes something like Mussolini's "eternal war" as the most likely of the "hazards" which we need in order to insure that humanity will survive in some social groups if not as a whole.

IT MUST BE SAID that when it comes to prognosis, the "Darwinians" are, unfortunately, the more convincing. What they have to say about human nature is certainly true of some of the people all of the time and, no doubt, of all of the people some of the time. They present us with an evil that we know, in contrast to a good that we can only surmise and at best can only faintly trust.

Still there is a non-Darwinian or at least a less Darwinian side. John Bleibtreu, for instance, accepts the Lorenzian view of the valuable function of aggression in the spacing and hierarchic ordering of a community, but certainly attaches greater meaning than any of the others to commensalism and cooperative "sharing." Even more striking, he emphasises the subjective individual who is occupied less with containing and utilising his "aggression" than with heeding the biological music of his existence. We might call it the evolutionary consent of the governed. Lorenz himself allows for co-operation and for bonds of personal love and friendship among members of the same species. But this bond depends ultimately on aggressive exclusions—"loving" if not precisely hating in concert, is being shoulder to shoulder (or wing-

tip to wing-tip) against a common enemy. Lorenz avows himself an optimist: "I think I have something to teach mankind that may help it to change itself for the better." But in his own terms this may strike us as irrationally hopeful and even inconsistent.

ALL THE AUTHORS FEEL called upon to make some therapeutic or meliorative recommendations. This is, perhaps oddly, a lighter task for the heavier Darwinians. Uncommitted to any benevolent hope for mankind, they are not called upon to do more than sign their names to the meliorative proposals sketched by the humanists—who generally admit or imply that these are, of necessity, vague and probably rather feeble.

Arthur Koestler is by himself and in his own terms more consistent in proposing that the best thing we can do with our aggression is to knock it out from time to time by some kind of chemical nostrum which, he believes, will be fairly soon and easily developed. To this, even if it is feasible, many will be strongly resistant. To the other four any such panacea must be regarded as anaesthetic or castrative. But in the present context the notion has one considerable merit. It serves to distinguish the means and capacity for destruction from the origins of destructiveness. In the world of animal creation surely our technology makes us unique Franksteins? This may seem obvious, indeed trite, and it is not only assented to by all five authors but has strongly motivated most of them in writing their books. Still, they hardly draw obvious or valid conclusions from it.

For granted that we ought all to realise our innate aggressiveness, this asks nothing very new. Under many names and with many rationalisations and excuses, most people who are faintly honest do become aware of their competitive and bloody-minded propensities. But does this really have a direct bearing on the problem of war and specific destructiveness in our special conditions? I fail to detect any very noticeable relevance. The root of the problem is precisely that powerful means have become *detached* from the human ends which ordinary people naturally desire.

Conceivably the authors mean that the kind of realisation they advocate will in time create a more favourable psychological climate wherein their "therapies" can operate. But this implies that a *reasonable* approach (of the sort their books are meant to represent) will itself be of initial benefit in educating an irrational and ineluctable instinct. (Koestler says roundly that "sweet reason" has failed.) This, once again, is to treat ordinary individuals as responsible when they have just been defined as ineffectual.

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THE REMEDIES or prophylactics would need to be sold by rather more powerful arguments. For most of them are so far from being new that we have had time and experience enough to guess they cannot be effective.

Lorenz here is typical. I am not criticising his basic precept (which is "know thyself," hence thine own instinctive aggression) but only the practical tips for healthy self-containment. In so far as these work they will work as they have always done—for the people for whom they work. In that case they represent a kind of self-regulation which is also instinctive or spontaneous, and it seems doubtful that they could be deliberately inculcated. I refer to competitive sport and other social equivalents, e.g., "laughter" or "humour," also recommended by Lorenz. This kind of "therapeutic" approach suggests another problem. How *much* of this "precious poison" (i.e., aggression) is medicinal? Who can say how *much* should be left?

Anthony Storr follows the standard prescription about competitive sport (and digging the garden). But he has elsewhere<sup>4</sup> made the more interesting suggestion that the Space Race has been a ritualisation of the Cold War, and hence, we assume, a sublimation of otherwise explosive aggression. Ardrey's intuition accepts this as true. Mine boggles. If it were true we should have to assume that in this example the "collective therapy" operates unconsciously. This would surely involve us in further enormous assumptions about another of man's instinctive endowments—this time of a wise and adaptive kind. It looks very unlikely that the opposing collective leaderships that run our political lives actually move in this way, finding their way—like zoo-keepers trying to mate Pandas across frontiers—towards effective ritual performances.

Because he is a practising psychiatrist, Storr's extrapolation from ethology is more important than most and we can legitimately expect more from him in the way of a convincing picture of the real psychological make-up of the actual human individual. We may even hope for some guidance towards answering the question—what bearing, if any, has private individual maladaptation on public adjustments? He admits that the average psychiatrist sees comparatively few patients. Are these groups an average sample or may they not be partly pre-selected by a penchant for psychiatric treatment, or by abnormal repression of aggression, or by anxiety about it? While it may be true that ordinary

people have little effect on public events and it may also be true that this is because they lack "competitive aggression," it is also observable that ordinary people do not go to psychiatrists. Many of them are ordinary because they positively prefer peace and see in it opportunities for enjoyment and creation and sometimes "love" (which, to Ardrey as to Sartre, is just one more form of competition).

THE LEAST THAT CAN BE SAID is that no one makes a clear and unequivocal definition of "aggression." Storr recognises that this would be highly desirable—"Aggression is a portmanteau word bursting at the seams." But throughout his book no such distinction is made, and often there is the appearance of confusion among such different meanings for the word as anger, hostility, curiosity, competitive drive, independence, sadistic dominance, defensiveness, and normal (and enjoyable) self-assertion or self-confidence. To add to the confusion, Storr thinks that "aggression" plays a predominant part in the genesis of the arts and in intellectual discovery and creation. (He finds here, too, the explanation why women have been artistically and intellectually less creative than men.) That has the same weakness as Freud's own explanation of artistic capacity—it confuses possible motivation, with the gift, the labour, and the product.

The "philosophy" that is already being erected on ethological analogies with our animal heredity suffers from another structural assumption which is also Freudian—that origins can safely be equated with causes. This encourages us to ignore qualitative change and the possibility that psychological "mutations" in the persons of outstanding human individuals can have the profoundest reverberations. There is a truly human "uniqueness" manifested in some (all too few) individuals. To be "human" implies the possibility of being reflexive, of being able to reflect on ourselves and on others, and also on the "real": what human reality is, and what are our true psychological conditions. Ethology applied to humanity has so far been begging the question, for it assumes that we can be *reduced* to the abstract and generalised animal category, and that what we think and feel about ourselves has no alternative significance.

It is worth noting that Dr. Storr—admitting that the emancipation of women is probably irreversible (does he regret it?)—thinks they are better occupied with "love," with nest-building and breeding than with artistic and intellectual "competition with men" (mental creation having no other than aggressive motivation, as we have seen). One doesn't have to be "worm-

<sup>4</sup> In a symposium called *The Natural History of Aggression* at the Institute of Biology in London, 1963.

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eaten with liberalism" to think that both he and Ardrey, if no others, fail to recognise in full that if you are to have a human pecking order that works, some people will have to like being pecked or at least to submit to it.

Psychological theories of all kinds have a strong tendency to run ahead of human evidence. Perhaps they are all always in danger of becoming what Karl Popper calls "Oedipal" philosophy—Psycho-analysis and Marxism were his key examples—inducing the effects they predict.

## The Burning Perch

### *A Memoir of Louis MacNeice*

I SAW comparatively little of Louis during the early part of 1963; few of his friends at the B.B.C. did, in fact. The year before he had left London to live in Hertfordshire; also he had opted for an in-and-out contract, instead of a full-term engagement. Under the terms of this he was committed to contract for the last six months of the year, leaving him as a free agent for the first half. He had been commissioned for an outright fee to write a full-length history of astrology and so, for the greater part of this time, he worked on research at the British Museum reading room. It was a chore, though a profitable one.

Occasionally, though, he would come around the pubs and clubs of the B.B.C. When he did, I think we all felt that his long affair with the Corporation was coming to an end, and that the next period under contract would be his last. Nor was this the opinion of a close circle: studio managers and editing engineers, those who were perhaps not so near to him, formed the same opinion. He still joined our groups vicariously, as he had always done, talking cricket and telling stories, complaining of the boredom of research at the B.M., but, characteristically, saying very little about his forthcoming book of verse. But behind it all, there was the impression of tired patience, never giving way to exasperation, and certainly not to be reckoned as resignation. Perhaps disillusionment comes nearest the mark. "*At home with no one, sibling or friend,*" as he wrote in *Goodbye to London*, with its wry opening admission:

*Having left the great mean city, I make  
Shift to pretend I am finally quit of her  
Though that cannot be as long as I work.*

With that disillusionment there could also

have been a certain disenchantment, so far as life in the country went. Louis was not a conforming commuter, for he was not a man of set habits. When he came back under contract, he usually caught a late train to Hertfordshire, if he did not stay in Town with friends. Altogether it was as though he was on the point of reaching a decision with himself, but what course that would take was a question that remained unasked in the mind.

MEANWHILE HE WAS writing *Persons from Porlock*, his dramatised feature with the Coleridgean theme of the artist whose creativity is distracted by commercial work, money troubles, love-life and drink. Louis had made this man a spelaeologist, and so, the script finished, he had gone to the Settle caves on the Yorkshire moors with a recording engineer and a local potholer. Having established the sound effects he required in the galleries and chamber, he had gone up on to the moor for a stroll while the recordings were made. It was a wet summer and a heavy storm broke, soaking him to the skin. Typically, he spent the evening in Leeds, then travelled back overnight to London, still in his wet clothes. I say typically because I feel sure that even had he been offered a change of clothing, he would have refused. He was never strong, in the robust sense, but he was tough; he had great staying power, whether working or drinking: a determined endurance that amounted to courageous obstinacy. That much was in evidence when I met him in the George, the day after his production of the programme. He looked feverish and tired, and his cough, always troublesome at the best of times, now obviously caused him pain. But when we advised him to go back to the country, he only exclaimed "Ach!" and cut his hand away in that dismissive way of his. However, we next heard that he was in bed under a doctor's care.

Then, early in the morning of 30 August, a Friday, I had a 'phone call from Mary Wimbush. Louis had been taken to St. Leonard's Hospital, Shoreditch, where his brother-in-law was senior surgeon. Would I tell the others, as he would like to have visitors? The one person who came immediately to mind was Laurence Gilliam, not so much for the fact that he was Head of Features, but because he was probably Louis' oldest friend in the Corporation. I rang him, and that evening we went together.

Louis was in a private ward, propped up with pillows, taking sharp, painful breaths, and holding an oxygen mask. His hair had grown very long, accentuating its greyness, so that he looked suddenly very much older. His eyes were lack-lustrous, except when coughing shook him and he lay back; then they had a hunted look. Above all, it was the exhaustion that was most disturb-

ing: the utter and, one felt, the ultimate weariness that the face showed.

Laurence did his best, big and urbane witty, the Savile clubman, retailing shop and gossip. It was a creditable act. Did he want anything—cigarettes? Louis raised the oxygen mask. Books?—there was a stack on the beside table. Drink?—Louis closed his eyes. We stayed for about twenty minutes, and during that time he barely spoke. Then, just as we were about to leave, he suddenly pointed to the window and asked, "What is there outside?" The prospect could scarcely have been more depressing: the two wings of the hospital, drab Victorian buff and Edwardian red brick, enclosed a sooty lawn with a shabby plane tree as centre piece. Beyond were high barracks of council flats. Laurence described the scene in faithful detail. It had been a day of showers, and the sun was going down in stormy colours. I had been a poor foil for Laurence's flow of talk, but now I said, "And the sky, Louis, is by Blake." The same sky had shown one evening five years before from the balcony of a riverside pub at Rotherhithe, and I had made the same remark, adding, "Blake could be a pretty amateur painter at times," and Louis had replied, "Yes, and sometimes a pretty amateur poet, as well." He may have remembered, for at least he gave a faint smile.

LATER, IN THE TAXI, on our way to dine a speaker, Laurence said, "Well, I didn't think he looked too bad, did you?" I agreed, rather slowly; it was no time for a truthful answer, so I turned the conversation. Neither of us returned to the matter, either then or after the protracted evening that followed, when he took me back to his flat for a final drink. Except for John Sharp, who was allowed in briefly the following day by Louis' sister, we were the last friends to see him. Two others who called on Sunday were not allowed to do so.

There was better news on Monday, for we heard that Louis had rallied slightly. Next day I was in the B.B.C. club during the lunch hour, when Grizelda Hervey and Geoffrey Bridson's wife, Joyce Rowe, took me aside. Grizelda simply said, "Bob—it's Louis. We've just 'phoned the hospital." I went across to the George to look for the others, and met Laurence on the way. He had already heard, and asked me whether I'd thought it would happen. I nodded but didn't ask the question back, for I thought there was no occasion to. The rest of the day was lost, so far as I was concerned, and Wednesday followed much the same pattern.

Laurence called the normal weekly departmental meeting of producers on Thursday morning in his office. We sat in silence, waiting for him to arrive, all wondering, I think, what he

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would say. We need not have worried; he came straight to the point, speaking in a matter-of-fact voice. *The Dark Tower* would be put out on Third the following Sunday week. The L.P.s were scratchy and would require a great deal of close editing. He would draft and speak an introduction to the programme, with a lead in by T. S. Eliot who would be approached to record a tribute on the lines of that which had appeared in that morning's *Times*. He turned to the senior producer, but he was going on leave. "Then, Bob, you will handle it. That's all for today." The meeting broke up, and I arranged a playback of the discs. Laurence hadn't understated their quality.

THAT EVENING I met Louis' wife, Hedli Anderson, by appointment at the house in Kensington where she was staying, having flown over from Ireland the previous day. Her first proposal was that we should go to the undertaker's, but I could not agree to this. The last sight of Louis had been enough. Instead, I suggested going to a nearby wine lodge, and there we had a long retrospective talk.

Meanwhile, higher administration was having difficulty in persuading Eliot to record. At first he declined, saying that he did not like broadcasting. Later he agreed on condition that he only read the *Times* tribute as it stood. Finally he consented to vary the text slightly. His secretary 'phoned me on Friday, saying that Mr. Eliot would see me in his office at five-and-twenty minutes past five that afternoon.

At Faber's I was taken up a small spiral staircase to a door bearing a long chromium plate, on which the initials T.S.E. were engraved in large characters. It was a smallish room, lined with book-shelves, nor was the desk, stacked with other books, a large one. He rose to an impressive height, the more so because his shoulders were bowed, and this, with the set of the head and the keen features, gave him an aquiline presence. Preliminaries over, I plugged in the mike and set it on one of the smaller stacks before him, with the switch of the tape recorder within concealed reach of my hand. He told me that he had altered three sentences of the *Times*' tribute. "And now we will have what I believe is called a 'run through'." I agreed, and unobtrusively switched on. He read in a flat voice, with a very faint Bostonian undertone. Once he stumbled over a word, and immediately went back to the beginning of the sentence, as any professional broadcaster would have done. At the end, he said, "And now we will have what I believe you call a 'take'." I told him that he had already been recorded. "Oh!" he exclaimed, "that was very wily of you." As I packed up the gear, I mentioned the programme on Dylan Thomas that I was to produce

at the end of the year, and asked whether he would record for that at some future date. No, he would not, he said, giving a slightly lizard smile. "You see, I hardly knew him." He extended a cool hand. The palaver was finished.

ST. JOHN'S WOOD parish church was filled for the funeral service on the Saturday. Late arrivals tiptoed reverently in, though they needn't have worried, for the service started twenty minutes late, by which time the organist must have exhausted his repertoire. Outside, the surrounding roads were blocked with traffic, there was a cacophony of horns and hooters and surprisingly the sound of choruses. One of them was "Sussex by the Sea," and I suddenly realised the reason. This was the final of the Gillette county cricket knock-out competition at Lord's, in which Sussex were playing Worcestershire. It would have made Louis smile, I thought, to have his *cortège* held up by a cricket match at Lord's where he had spent so many afternoons on the terrace in front of the Tavern, austere and donnish in his glasses, but usually engaged in conversation when a six was hit or a wicket fell. A young cleric kinsman, who bore a striking resemblance to the black-haired MacNeice of the 1930s, read the lesson; then we sang Bunyan's hymn. In a way, it had more resemblance to a wedding than a funeral, for the family were on one side of the aisle, and Mary Wimbush with her relations on the other. And so it was afterwards when we went to drink, as Louis would have wished: there were two separate camps. I left with John Sharp, to spend the weekend at his place in Sussex, returning on the Monday to start editing *The Dark Tower*. This entailed copying the discs on to tape, making minute cuts to eliminate scratch and clicks, when these were not behind Britten's trumpet music, and finally recopying on to programme tape, with adjustments of level. In all, this required twelve hours of concentrated work, given the help of a channel engineer and a studio manager, both of them highly professional. I also produced Laurence's introductory piece, cutting its content from nine to three minutes, and modifying some of the more ebullient statements: suggestions which he accepted without question, as he would.

That having been done, a clear fortnight remained before my next programme, and I decided to spend the last ten days in Paris, travelling by sea and rail for reasons of sheer economy. At Calais the train was crowded, and I had to sit on my suitcase in the corridor. I began reading Louis' last book of poems, *The Burning Perch*, which I had bought on my way to Victoria, but the passage of human traffic to and from the adjacent lavatory made concentration impossible, and so, having read the first dozen or so poems, I turned to a paperback instead. On arrival, I

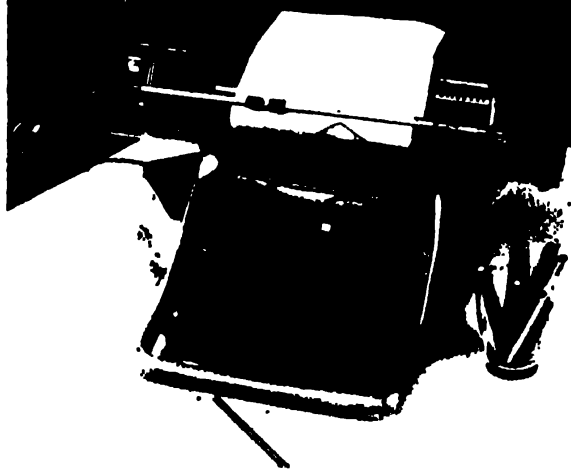
drove to the Hôtel d'Alsace in the Rue des Beaux Arts, where I had stayed a year earlier. I hadn't booked, but there was a vacancy, although on the top floor, to be reached by climbing ninety spiral stairs. I took it, promising myself that in future these should be climbed only once a day. The window looked across to the conical cap of St. Germain-des-Prés; below was a flagged courtyard with a fig tree against one wall, as Wilde might have seen it from the room on the first floor, where he eventually died.

On my first morning I went to the Delacroix exhibition at the Louvre, and there, above the doorway at the entrance to the *salon*, was the picture of Virgil and Dante in the underworld, and Louis' line came to mind "... *There was the ferryman just as Virgil and Dante had seen him.*" Only the catalogue showed that it was Phlegyas, not Charon, who ferried the poets around the infernal city of Dis. Next afternoon I visited Père Lachaise for the first time, and spent a sombre afternoon there. For the rest, I walked a good deal, ate comparatively little and drank steadily, always finishing up at the *Deux Magots* or the *Flore*. My French is limited, and I was not looking for company.

THE DREAM CAME ON Monday night, or rather in the early hours of Tuesday morning. I was stand-

ing in the chamber of a high vaulted cave, the walls of which were smooth, not rough-faced, and a shade of rich red mahogany. In the centre of the chamber stood a large birdcage. Inside was a monstrous owl, with a head fully the size of a man's. The feathers and markings were those of a budgerigar: black and white, with blue, grey and yellow in bars and speckles. It sat facing me along the length of, and not across, its perch. The eyes were not myopic, like those of a night bird, although it was light in the cave, nor were they predatory. They were almond-shaped, and slightly slanted, and could have been the eyes of a man. Their expression was calm, with a certain sadness in the stare. I felt that the bird was not unfriendly towards me, and so I opened the door and went inside. I laid my hand on the head and stroked it, and immediately the whole body fell apart on either side of the perch. There were the brains, the gradation of organs and the neatly coiled intestines, with no blood showing, perfectly mummified in their state of desiccation. At that point the dream ended, and I awoke in early daylight. The associations of the images were obvious, and I reached for *The Burning Perch*, expecting to find a title poem, but there was none. Instead, reading through, I found the hidden line in the poem "*Budgie*," and with it another significance: "*He stands at his post on the burning perch. . .*"

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I walked a good deal that day and drank steadily, asking myself questions to which I could find no answers. I could only be sure of one point, namely that I had not read the poem *Budgie* before that morning. Neither had Louis ever mentioned it on the rare occasions when he had discussed his verse. The nearest he had come to doing so was when we had asked him the source of the book's title, and he had said in a throw-away voice, "It comes from Bunyan." Nor had I known that the key poem would be dedicated to Robert MacBryde, the Scottish painter, whose inseparable friend, Robert Colquhoun, had died suddenly beside him as they were hanging pictures for Colquhoun's show at the Museum Gallery a year before. (Louis had attended the private view with his daughter and had named his own generous price for a line drawing which she had chosen.) Lacking the expertise, I could not interpret the dream in terms of Freudian analysis, and I made no attempt to do so. Instead, I remembered that in mythology the owl is the bird of death. I remembered too how Louis had once told me of sitting up late with his sister at their stepmother's house in Northern Ireland and of how, on the night before her death, both had heard the banshee. My face must have shown the scepticism I felt, for he gave an angry exclamation. (Three years later, I recalled this to his sister,

after recording her for the radio portrait of Louis, and she told me that it had been so: there had been a strange cry in the night silence of the countryside.) Equally, I thought of T. S. Eliot's passage on superstitions in *The Dry Salvages*, but that was not a corrective. I read and re-read the ironical lines of "*Budgie*," going from one estaminet to another, until eventually a sense of loss took over, as it had not done until that time. It did not extend back so many years, the friendship to which I had been admitted; a friendship, moreover, that had been prefaced by a period of uncertainty, if not distrust on either side. Perhaps it had begun with another poet, for when I had been telephoned that bad November evening with the news that Dylan had died in New York an hour before, Louis was the only person who I thought should know. After that, a better understanding had grown up between us. There was much to be remembered over the next ten years, enough certainly to last through until the waiters stacked the tables at the *Flore* at four o'clock the morning after. I walked the banks of the Seine until first light, for he'd always liked to watch the dawn, then went back to the hotel, climbed the stairs to my small room and, in the deep morning sleep that followed, had no other visitation.

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# BOOKS & WRITERS

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## To Criticize the Critic

On "Men of Letters" — By JOHN WAIN

MR. GROSS' SUBJECT is the literary culture of England, that literary culture which became widely diffused in the mid-18th century, climbed to its height in the 19th, and declined in the 20th.<sup>1</sup> He is concerned, that is, not so much with literature as with the literary *milieu*; less with art than with the context of art. A poet or novelist, at the rare moments when he is in full creative flow, exists in a *respublica* of poets or novelists; but on the average day in the average week he is likely to be spending his time on book-reviewing, or editing, or giving a lecture. In this part of his life he exists in a *respublica* of "men of letters," which includes practitioners, of every rank, and also non-practising critics and middlemen. In T. S. Eliot's "The Classics and the Man of Letters" (originally a lecture delivered in 1941), he took care to define "man of letters" so as to leave plenty of room for the ordinary journeyman: "It is," he assured his Cambridge audience,

because I do not want to concentrate your attention upon men of genius that I have used the term "man of letters." This includes men of the second or third, or lower ranks as well as the greatest; and these secondary writers provide collectively, and individually in varying degrees, an important part of the environment of the great writer, as well as his first audience, his first appreciators, his first critical correctors—and perhaps his first detractors.

That "perhaps" is charitable. But the definition is satisfying because it gathers in the large as well as the small. Even the greatest writer of any epoch will move to some extent in "literary circles," will be acquainted with other writers and share their social conditions and problems; most important of all, his audience will be their audience, and, since any public is to some extent shaped by what it feeds on, the major writer will find that the habits and expectations

of his readers will have been formed by what his contemporaries, *en bloc*, are offering in the market-place. The implications here are serious and far-reaching. In fact, if the public disputes of authors have any dignity at all, if they ever succeed in rising above mere personal squabbles, their dignity derives from a recognition that they are all in it together; a writer who, by sensationalism and mountebanking, debases the literary currency, is not only failing to live up to what is best in his own talent: he is making a good level of work to that degree more difficult for everybody, because he is lowering the public's expectation of it.

At all events, the "man of letters" is the characteristic inhabitant of the literary vivarium. The literary artist, major or minor, is a man (or woman) "of letters" at the ordinary level of his life, rather than at the extraordinary moments of creation. Seen in this perspective, literary people form a social mass, and it is this mass that Mr. Gross has chosen to describe historically: how it began to form, how it grew larger and more solid, and how, and under what pressures, it broke up into the fragments we know today.

As the subject of a social-cultural-historical work, this is legitimate and of undoubted importance. But it has two drawbacks. First, it is immense and vague in area, with ramifications in all directions. To treat it successfully, a writer would need not only an exceptionally wide range but also a very firm discipline, the ability to decide, in case after case, what was relevant and what was merely a tempting sideline. If Mr. Gross does not always have this discipline, it would be useless to blame him personally. We are all, to some extent, the product of our *milieu*, and it has been Mr. Gross' lot to live and work in that London "literary world" that would hardly tend, in its present state of deliquescence, to instil discipline in anybody. One need only glance at the excited overpraise heaped on his book by senior members of the fraternity, the ecstasy aroused by its undoubted brightness and suppleness and the uncompre-

<sup>1</sup> *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters: Aspects of English Literary Life since 1800.* By JOHN GROSS. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 63s.

hending silence before its omissions and confusions, to see that this is an enervating climate for a young man of letters to grow up in. The wonder is that Mr. Gross has kept so alert.

THE SECOND DISADVANTAGE of the subject is that it necessarily takes us a good deal into the company of second-raters and even of mediocrities. The effect of this, through chapter after chapter, is bound to be slightly depressing. It is like writing a history of the theatre and never allowing oneself to mention anything more important than amateur dramatics and pierhead entertainments. The period covered by Mr. Gross' book saw the writing of masterpiece after masterpiece; it is the period of *Great Expectations*, of *Middlemarch*, of *The Wreck of the Deutschland* and *In Memoriam* and *Men and Women*, of *The Old Wives' Tale* and *The Ambassadors*, of *The Waste Land*, *Sons and Lovers*, *Ulysses*. The European literary intelligence in general, and the branch of it which operates in the English language in particular, gave dazzling proof after proof of vitality, of power to uplift and sustain the human race, to take pity on its struggles and agonies, to celebrate its triumphs. If we take any civilised nation and read its major literature since 1800, we are likely to come out of the experience with an enhanced sense of what literature can do for us; our perceptions of life will have been deepened and strengthened; we shall have kept company with giants.

The same cannot be said, in the very nature of things, for men of letters, however much we may bless their hearts and their honest hard-working heads. The man of letters works away at digging irrigation ditches; he keeps the public in touch with new developments and also maintains the vital channel to the past; he edits anthologies which present the important works of the national tradition to each new generation; he popularises, he expounds, he preaches, he admonishes—but one great poem, bursting crystal-cold from the solid rock of the human imagination, is a stronger affirmation of the values of literature than a thousand years of such honest plodding. Puttenham's *Art of English Poesie* is the work of a "man of letters," but Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet*. And of course Mr. Gross knows this! But all that reading of second-rate worthies, all that blanking-off of the most glorious and life-giving things in literature, have left him a little disheartened, so that at the end of the book he is not quite sure, after all, whether there is much percentage in all this reading and writing:

It is critics and reviewers whom I have in mind, not creative writers, but if one asks why

their role should have been reduced, one must first ask whether literature itself doesn't seem less important than it once did. After the horrors of the last war, with the continuing horror of lesser wars ever since, and above all with the thought of the Bomb always there at the back of our minds, perhaps the whole thing no longer matters all that much.

If we come to this sort of statement after a long spell of leafing through the yellowed pages of superannuated literary magazines and following the forgotten controversies of men who were learned and enthusiastic, but whose learning and enthusiasm have not kept their memory alive, we shall perhaps be inclined to agree with it. But if we come to it from the life-giving experience of great writing, we shall be more likely to ask what, since "all that lives must die," the Bomb has to do with it anyway. The best way to make death worth dying is to make life worth living, and an affirmation of our humanity, through the triumphant exercise of the imagination, is one of the best ways to do that, and to hell with the Bomb.

BUT TO our *moutons*. I spoke of the book's "flaws of organisation." The chief of these, and perhaps the only serious one, is the plotting of the graph. A book that sets out to show, in historical terms, the "rise and fall" of anything must have a valid diagram. And this one starts nearly half-a-century too late. It ought to begin in 1755, the year in which Samuel Johnson, with his superb rebuke to Chesterfield, signalled the end of the long ages in which an author had to depend on private patronage. The same year, neatly enough, saw the publication of Johnson's *Dictionary* and the award to him of an honorary M.A. at Oxford, that first public recognition which paved the way for the granting of his pension seven years later.

For what happened to Johnson was happening to English men of letters in general. Literature, in the form in which we know it, cannot get started without good roads and an effective transport system. The 18th century was the first epoch in which the ordinary citizen of the country, no matter where he lived, could deploy his purchasing power to the benefit of publishers and authors. The appeal to the public, which enables the writer to by-pass court and *chapelle*, is not possible unless the public can be got at. Johnson's refusal of the favours of a patron, which Chesterfield was perfectly willing to bestow on him, may have been triggered off in the immediate sense by a feeling of injured merit—after all, Chesterfield had done nothing to help him when he was really in difficulties, and "encumbered him with help" only when he

had managed to batter down these difficulties by himself. But it is entirely consistent with Johnson's general position—his approval of the spread of trade and manufacture, his interest in anything that raised the standard of comfort and convenience for ordinary people and made them less dependent on their masters.

Literature in our modern sense begins, and the life of the "man of letters" becomes possible, with the turnpike road and the stage-coach; muddy weather and the highwayman are more serious enemies than hostile critics and jealous fellow-writers. This fact is dramatised, in a way, by Mr. Gross' choice of a starting-point—1802, the year of the founding of the *Edinburgh Review*. Well before the railway, Edinburgh could set up as a rival literary metropolis, and attract important English writers to its pages, because the distance between it and London had so effectively shrivelled and because it could hope to reach subscribers in all parts of the kingdom. This founding of the first great review did, indeed, usher in the Age of the Reviewer; but Johnson's letter to Chesterfield was the splendid fanfare that began the age of independent authorship. just as his *Lives of the Poets* has remained, as Eliot so wisely said,

...the only monumental collection of critical studies of English poets in the language, with a coherence, as well as an amplitude, which no other English criticism can claim.

These *Lives*, written to order, are the first major work by an English man of letters, acting purely as such; a man who makes his living by knowing about literature, knowing about it from the inside and from the outside. We all know the story: how Johnson, at the height of his reputation and in the full ripeness of his powers, was approached by a group of forty "book-sellers" (Sc. publishers) and asked to write the biographical and critical prefaces for a bumper collection of what at that date (1777) would have been considered the "modern poets"; how he accepted the job and did it as a job like any other—how he made no attempt to prune the list of names they gave him, though it contained some obvious duds. His own contribution to the list was, generously, to add a few names of men he thought should be included. We know the story, but the marvellous quality of the work does not always get our full recognition. It is the complete vindication, at the very beginning, of the idea of a "man of letters." Johnson is writing mainly about poets whose working lives went on into his own day; many of them had been his personal acquaintances, even his close friends ("Such was the fate of Collins, with whom I once delighted to converse"), and even the earliest of them, men like Milton and Cowley

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and Waller, were no further from him than, say, Tennyson is from us. As a result, the *Lives* as a whole form a coherent history of that whole epoch, offering a view of its literary and social development. If the strength and solidity of Johnson's analysis come from reading and meditation, the immediacy, the personal engagement, comes from the fact that he participated in the age he is describing. The period he was dealing with was not, in fact, his favourite period of English poetry; he admired Chaucer and Shakespeare more than he admired any of the poets whose lives he wrote; but his account of these poets is generous because he knows at first hand the difficulties of living, and of writing poetry, in that age.

Nothing that Mr. Gross deals with is as magnificent as Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*; so that his book, from my point of view, is misshapen from the beginning; the first large pylon on which its cables ought to be strung is not there. What are the others? In a field so cluttered with interesting minor figures, it is all the more important to sort out one's main points of reference. My own choice would be Macaulay (the first really effective intermediary between a very cultured inner circle and a receptive wider public); Bagehot (the man of the world as man

of letters); Matthew Arnold (the poet who goes down into the arena to break a lance on behalf of Sweetness and Light); Saintsbury (literary journalist into scholar, Mark I); Arnold Bennett (faith in art combined with faith in everyday life); and Eliot (the authoritarian who yet knows how to give and sympathise as well as control).

Taking this general view, and applying it to Mr. Gross' book, one finds that all these figures are treated fully and convincingly, except for Eliot, who comes at the end of the book when perhaps Mr. Gross was getting tired. On most of them, the book offers lively and penetrating remarks, stimulating the reader to counter-comment, so that the ideal review would be another book of the same length. Short of affording myself this luxury, I will merely say that I found Mr. Gross interesting on nearly all my key figures, and I shall try to amplify his findings only in two cases: Arnold Bennett, whose very individual position in English social history doesn't quite emerge here, and Eliot, of whom Mr. Gross' treatment is simply thin and nerveless.

ARNOLD BENNETT, considered not only as a novelist but as a "man of letters," is important because he represents the meeting-point of two large forces. On the one hand, Bennett was totally serious about art—serious in the way that the later 19th century in France was serious, and for the same reasons: a sceptic and a materialist, he felt that, since religion was a dead letter, the higher values of the race could be fully realised in art. On the other hand, he refused to allow himself the arcane manner of a high priest. Living in an age of cheap books, excellent reprints of the classics, and a widespread appetite for self-improvement, he cherished all his life the ideal of a mass public for really good writing. Perhaps this point of view is possible only for a novelist, and one writing within the heyday of the novel, since the novel is a democratic form of literature that has not lacked its admirers within every kind of aristocracy. Perhaps, again, it is possible only to a man who has himself climbed by the ladder of self-improvement. Bennett's father was a struggling self-made man, with nine children, who finally managed to qualify as a solicitor; the family atmosphere was typically Victorian, one of sturdy respectability and self-improvement. When Bennett wrote criticism, he clearly had in mind people like the Hanley youth he had once been: determined, impatient with their drab surroundings, eager to get the best out of life, whatever "the best" might turn out to be. He wanted to help such people by guiding them towards excellence, wooing their taste

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away from the second-rate; he believed that if you put good writing in front of them they would instinctively prefer it to muck. To some extent, facts bore him out. In his own case, he made no more than a living out of the pot-boilers of the early years; only when increasing maturity, and the firm grasp of an experienced hand, enabled him to turn out classics of the realistic novel like *The Old Wives' Tale* and *Clayhanger* did the public shower wealth on him.

Check by jowl with his discussion of Bennett as a critic, Mr. Gross has an interesting section on the growth of "Everyman's Library." The juxtaposition is a happy one. Bennett's attitude was formed during the optimistic years when the auguries for a mass culture were good. A large middle class wanted cheap books, the publishing industry had low costs and easy distribution, the classics were out of copyright, and there was no radio, cinema, or TV. At his best, Bennett is a critic for the Age of Everyman's Library. He does not assume erudition in his audience, but he does assume liveliness, reluctance to be fobbed off with *Ersatz*, and a willingness to pay attention. The latter, degenerate inheritors of that popular style of criticism (James Agate, for instance) always give the impression of writing for tired business men or anaemic housewives, whose attention cannot be held for more than five minutes at a stretch. Bennett never did. As a boy, he had flogged himself through classic French novels with grammar and dictionary: if it took hard work to get the message, he would work hard. One is reminded of James Joyce at a similar age learning Norwegian in order to study Ibsen. (The parallel between the two writers does not end there; both are artists of memory, who left their native settings physically but continued to inhabit them imaginatively.)

Mr. Gross gives an excellent account of Bennett's early criticism. The articles he wrote in the *New Age* in 1908-11, under the name of "Jacob Tonson" "could still," says Mr. Gross, "serve as a model for what a good literary column ought to be." Again, "It is remarkable how often the *New Age* articles hit the nail on the head, how decisively Bennett grasped the significance of writers who were still unknown or underrated in England at the time." Remarkable, yes. But not by any means inexplicable, when one remembers the intense seriousness with which Bennett took literature and the arts in general, and the trouble he took to inform himself about them. Is there anywhere, today, a critic—and I mean a professional, who makes criticism his sole occupation—who has put himself through anything like the discipline that Bennett underwent in his hours of relaxation



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**BASIL BLACKWELL**

from an exhausting creative output? As soon as he was free to live where and how he liked, Bennett moved to France, where he mainly lived from 1903 to 1911. Paris, at that time the undisputed world capital of the arts, the Paris we read about in Roger Shattuck's *The Banquet Years*, was his university, and no one ever put the university to better use. As well as life, he studied literature, music, art. His circle included men like Ravel, Gide, Marcel Schwob. He took in, and comprehended, Impressionist painting, the ballet of Diaghilev, the music of Stravinsky, before these artists were known in London. When the great writers of the Russian 19th century made their impact on the world at large, they did so through French translations which preceded the English versions by anything up to a decade. Bennett knew these translations. He savoured the work of Chekhov, for instance, and showed a fine use of Chekhovian techniques in his best story, "The Death of Simon Fuge," before the name of Chekhov was heard in London drawing-rooms. As a critic, he studied continually to improve his range and to keep abreast of new work; so that he, if anyone, was in a position to fulfil the Arnoldian ideal of criticism, to make known "the best that was thought and said in the world," and to a wide audience.

All this Mr. Gross knows, and conveys: at least, so far as the early Bennett is concerned, the Bennett of the "Jacob Tonson" period. What he misses is the fact that the later Bennett, reviewing batch after batch of new books in Beaverbrook newspapers, shows the same qualities. Mr. Gross is sniffy about this later work ("the difference," he says loftily, is "simply one of quality."). Yet if book-reviewing for a mass-circulation paper must be done at all, Bennett's is the way to do it. He had the courage to risk a continual stream of judgments on new books; he knew he had enemies who would pounce with malicious glee on any quotable lapse; and he went right ahead, reading and commenting, and unerringly picking out the important writers of the generation that was to succeed his own. He picked out Lawrence and Joyce, Faulkner and Hemingway; he praised Edward Dahlberg, Italo Svevo, Graham Greene's first novel, the poems of Robert Graves; of T. S. Eliot he was writing, as early as 1918, "I was so struck by his work that I made his acquaintance. . . ."

WHY, GIVEN ALL THIS, was Bennett so bitterly resented by the literary establishment? Why the stream of caricatures? Why was he pilloried as "Mr. Nixon" in Ezra Pound's *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*, travestied in the polemical writings of Virginia Woolf? But even to formulate the

question is to see that that answer is a very simple one. A social and intellectual *chappelle* doesn't forgive the self-educated outsider who shows up its deficiencies. It was not only the Five Towns brand of provinciality that Bennett castigated. Bloomsbury, though some of its members made notable voyages of discovery, had its provincialities too. As for Pound, it must be said bluntly that while *Mauberry* is a fine poem, its strength doesn't derive from any kind of accuracy in the gallery of satiric portraits. He sees English society too much from the outside; he can see that Fleet Street is vulgar and that the First World War oughtn't to have happened, but when he comes to individuals and tries to use them as nodes for social comment, he goes wrong; the portrait of Max Beerbohm, for instance, which seems to turn on the mistaken notion that Beerbohm was a Jew. Similarly, in the "Mr. Nixon" portrait, Pound has Bennett saying—

*Butter reviewers. From fifty to three hundred  
I rose in eighteen months.  
The hardest nut I had to crack  
Was Dr. Dundas.*

*I never mentioned a man but with the view  
Of selling my own works.  
The tip's a good one, as for literature  
It gives a man a sinecure.*

To anyone who knows Bennett's criticism,<sup>3</sup> with its disinterested and generous enthusiasms, the cynical tone rings very false. "Dr. Dundas," by the way, is W. Robertson Nicoll, about whom Mr. Gross has a page or two of illuminating information; where is the evidence that Bennett regarded him, or any other reviewer, as a nut to be cracked? Yet this nonsense is tacitly assented to by the Pound industry in general; look up *any* critic's comment on *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* and try to find one word of acknowledgment that the portrait of Bennett is a slander.

TO TURN TO ELIOT, his importance lies, of course, mainly in the fact that he exemplifies the authority of the major poet who is also a first-rate critic. But not only there. He is also crucial in a survey of this kind because he bridges two gaps which were very wide at the beginning of his career and had narrowed

<sup>3</sup> There is no longer any excuse for not knowing it, since the appearance of a judicious selection: *The Author's Craft and other Critical Writings of Arnold Bennett*, edited by Samuel Hynes (University of Nebraska Press, \$2.25).

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appreciably by the end of it—as a result, quite possibly, of his personal influence and example as much as anything else. One was the gap between English and American literature, the other the gap between the university and the man of letters.

When Eliot first started writing, there was not much transatlantic traffic. He and Ezra Pound (they were inevitably, at the beginning, bracketed together) arrived in Europe a few years before the mass migration of the "lost generation." They were, in fact, intermediaries between that generation and the earlier generation of Whistler, Henry James, and Logan Pearsall Smith. But, of course, the parallel with Pound was superficial. Where Pound was a country boy from the tall rhubarbs, travelling to Europe to get the message at first hand because he was labouring under a sense of having been "born/In a half savage country/Out of date," Eliot came from a New England Brahminical background that was decidedly better instructed than anything he found on crossing the ocean. Furthermore, as a scion of a family with clearly defined roots in 17th-century England, he could, if he chose, regard the 250 years in America as a long week-end, and his migration as a home-coming.

This side of Eliot's personal heritage was later to be made much of, when the literary (and heavily Anglican) establishment decided, in the 1940s, on a policy of whole-hearted acceptance. But in the '20s, when Eliot was busily engaged in stirring things up, the respectable ancestry and the 17th-century connections were largely ignored, and Eliot was resented as an interfering foreigner. I don't mean that he was resented by everyone; his importance was understood by many people right from the start, and Mr. Gross is also very clear about this. Still, some resentment of Eliot there certainly was, and I can testify, from many conversations, in the 1940s, with survivors of that epoch, that he was specifically resented *as an American*. (I can remember H. W. Garrod, who had been Professor of Poetry at Oxford, saying to me dismissively that Eliot's poetry was "just poetry Americanised.")

Eliot's life and work at least contributed to the healing of *that* breach. English literary life is no longer insular. Mr. Gross is well aware of this, but he seems to see it mostly as a problem: one more difficulty which confronts the already gasping English man of letters. In his Epilogue, he writes:

Science, sociology, the cinema—the kind of forces which have been mentioned so far are at work throughout the entire more-or-less civilised world. But there is one further development which affects English critics specifically. Since the

war it has inevitably been brought home to them far more forcibly than ever before that there are many other authors writing in English besides Englishmen. In practice that means, overwhelmingly, Americans. But in addition writers from Commonwealth or ex-Commonwealth countries—figures as different as A. D. Hope and Chinua Achebe—are at last beginning to count for English readers in their own right, not as curiosities or poor relations, and this is going to be more and more the case as time goes on. The English literary scene itself, too, would be noticeably poorer if it were not for some of the Commonwealth writers who have settled here in recent years. At first sight it may not seem as though all this has any particular bearing on the role of the critic. Nor does it, perhaps, in immediate practical terms. But I think it is true to say that in the past most English critics have been fortified by the idea, whether explicitly formulated or not, that by right of birth they are the guardians and interpreters of one of the world's great literary traditions. Put that bluntly, it may make them sound as though they were the custodians of the Crown Jewels, and no doubt a good deal of inferior criticism has often been a form of patriotic advertising. But the question goes much deeper than that. One need only consider the part played by the idea of English tradition in the thought of Leavis, or, more recently, Raymond Williams. Or take F. W. Bateson. . . .

"One need only consider" these things, but I wish Mr. Gross had taken a page or two to consider them with us, rather than merely indicating an involved knot of problems involving issues, and writers, of very varying importance. I find it difficult to regard Raymond Williams or F. W. Bateson as such important critics as Mr. Gross does; with Leavis there is, certainly, a problem, for Leavis' notion of an English tradition can be a very two-edged instrument. There is a real topic here, and I think the case against Leavis' view was made very clearly in Stephen Spender's *The Struggle of the Modern* (1963) and is still awaiting an answer. But my point at the moment is this: the internationalisation of English writing, the fact that each national idiom exists both in its own right and as part of the complex of a give-and-take within the whole English-speaking world, is surely not just another irritating problem like the vogue for television or the high cost of printing, but an interesting new field for the English critic, a broadening of horizons, a whole new range of opportunities. And if this is so, then surely the place to discuss the general issues is not in a few lines of a rather discouraged Epilogue, but with reference to the work of a major poet?

Eliot, whose tradition and temperament were an interesting blend of the English and the American, expressed his whole self in his poetry; and any discussion of these frontier problems

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ought to take place in proximity to *that* achievement, *that* stimulus, *that* great example. Such a discussion would inevitably have gone on to consider the case of Auden, who, as things are, gets no sustained discussion at all, though he is certainly important as "a man of letters" as well as a poet.

THE OTHER GAP bridged by Eliot, that between university literary studies and "the world of letters" generally, has of course been closed almost completely by purely social developments. As the habit of book-reading has shrunk, organised literary studies have bloated. As literature has progressively ceased to divert the leisure hours of middle-aged men, it has more and more been ladled down the throats of adolescents. The critic now finds his audience within the educational system. Mr. Gross is aware of this development, naturally, but he deals with it only in that same rather depressed Epilogue, and it seems to present itself to him mainly in terms of the difficulty of finding anything new to say about a body of primary material that cannot, by definition, grow any larger.

The truth is that unless you are either a critic of the first rank, or lucky enough to be caught

up in a major revolution in taste, there are unlikely to be more than a limited number of original things which you have to say about any author who has been widely discussed already. But dissertations have to be submitted, and (where promotion is at stake) books have to be published. There are various possibilities open. You can spread your insights thin (many a long-drawn-out thesis could be compressed into a tolerably interesting article). You can choose an unexplored subject—and as time goes on, those that remain are bound to be more and more trivial. Or you can strain after false originality. One way or another, the books which result, and which multiply at an increasing rate, are likely to mean as little to posterity as most nineteenth-century collections of sermons do to a modern reader.

There are two comments that must be made on this. To begin with, Mr. Gross is overlooking the almost universal tendency to make *contemporary* literature the subject of university study. In America, the point has already been reached at which Joe Bloggs can publish a novel on Monday, and on Tuesday morning that novel is being dissected by the Joe Bloggs specialist who combines with five other specialists in English 259B, "THE LITERATURE OF REVOLT: *Mailer, Burroughs, LeRoi Jones, Cleaver, and Bloggs.*" To most Europeans of

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my generation, brought up on the idea that the function of the university is to foster the study of the classics and by so doing to equip the student to read the literature of his own time for himself, the idea is slightly strange and even comical. But only to my generation. Already, in Europe as well as America, the young accept that books, whether ancient or modern, are things they meet in school and college. And these institutions, accepting their changed social role, make valiant efforts to introduce the young to the unfolding literary scene. So that there need be no problem about over-cropping the primary material, not even after Joe Bloggs finally takes a job at the university and teaches the Bloggs course himself. His colleagues can always tape-record his commentary and give a commentary on it in Course 260A, "BLOGGS ON BLOGGS."<sup>3</sup>

A second point about Mr. Gross' view of the problems of the academic literary scholar is that Eliot himself undercut that particular argument as early as "Tradition and the Individual Talent" in 1919. Since the backward look modifies the object, it is not a question of combing

the field of literary history to find some neglected topic that "hasn't been done." Things simply don't stay "done." And the more important an author is, the more essential it is to restate our critical assessment of him, freshly, every few years, and to do it without kow-towing either to the past or to our estimate of the probable future. The uninstructed person who glances round a library, and, on seeing the hundreds of books about, say, Shakespeare, concludes satirically that there must be a disastrous over-plus of effort, is missing the point. On a writer like Shakespeare, only a very few books—ten or a dozen at most—are genuinely relevant to any specific moment in time: genuinely thrown up by it, genuinely answering its needs. The rest belong to history. They are part of the record of how the work of Shakespeare has affected succeeding generations of men.

One realises, once again, that Mr. Gross is well aware of this. His sentence about being "lucky enough to be caught up in a major revolution in taste" shows that he hasn't read Eliot for nothing. But taste doesn't stand still for years at a time and then suddenly jerk round in a "major revolution." Obviously there are some periods of rapid change—of cataclysm, even. But no period is without its slow and unobtrusive altering of the landscape. We live

<sup>3</sup>No one will accuse me of exaggeration who has looked into the teaching of literature at modern universities.

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in time, and time is a conveyor-belt. No study of a phenomenon in the past—a writer, a political event, a *milieu*, anything—keeps its freshness for more than about ten years. After that, if it is good enough to live, it lives with another kind of vitality.

It was Eliot's awareness of historicity, his concern that "the study of the past" should "make us more conscious of what we are, and of our own limitations, and give us more understanding of the world in which we now live," that made him an important catalyst in the fusion of the academic and non-academic literary spheres. No doubt this fusion would have taken place anyway, as an irresistible social change; but social changes, if they can't be resisted, can often be leavened and humanised, influenced in the direction of intelligence. The academic world would in any case have swallowed a large part of the literary world, but Eliot's presence, it could be argued, did a great deal to stop this process from being merely crass and cannibalistic. He made frequent appearances at universities; he was well-read enough to meet the academics on their own ground, but his point of view remained firmly that of the practitioner and of the modern man, the writer and reader *now*. If we may say of Arnold Bennett that he cherished an optimism about the literary discrimination of the man in the street, we may say of Eliot that he cherished the same optimism about the man in the academic street. And this is important in an age like ours, when what we have to deal with is not so much the common reader as the common student: the common reader, that is, no longer left to his own devices but corralled, herded and directed, so that he becomes less spontaneous and more self-conscious without becoming any less common.

ONE OF THE MARKS of greatness in a man is the ability to make unity out of diversity; to reconcile, in his own person, facts and forces that would otherwise seem irreconcilable. Eliot had this power. One sees it in the way he fused together the diverse influences that formed his poetry; his chief early influences were late 19th-century French poetry and early 17th-century English poetry, which do not really have much in common, but which Eliot was able to blend into one idiom by the sheer warmth and responsiveness of the interest he took in them. Similarly, he could use his scholarly knowledge of the past to introduce serious standards into the criticism of contemporary writing; one never feels, in him, that abrupt change of gear that usually happens when a learned literary historian begins to discuss the contemporary scene. This, no doubt, was because the past was as

real to him as the present. The "tradition" he so constantly invoked was life-giving as well as limiting; if it was responsible for most of Eliot's prejudices, it was also the fuel for that wonderful intensity of interest, that luminous concentration, that makes him (when all is said and done) so much the best critic of our century.

It is a pity, then, that Mr. Gross' section on Eliot should be rather thin and perfunctory; altogether it is very much the weakest part of his book. No discussion of Eliot's concept of tradition; no attempt to illuminate his essential scheme of values—why he preferred Dante to Shakespeare, why the loving absorption in the Anglican culture of the 1630s should have led him to feel personally threatened by Milton (as the supreme voice of Puritanism) while leaving intact his geniality towards Dryden. It has become usual to say that Eliot's vitality as a critic lasted only as long as his vitality as a poet—that is, till the *Four Quartets* were written; Mr. Gross, in a curiously grudging mood, suggests that it doesn't last even that long; the major poet in Eliot, he says, "survived a good deal longer" than the major critic. I prefer the more generally held view, that they went pretty much hand in hand. One of Eliot's best critical essays is "The Music of Poetry," which he wrote in 1942, just after finishing the *Quartets*; besides saying very nearly everything that can usefully be said on this difficult topic, the essay contains, by implication, an illuminating description of those principles of musical-cum-poetic form on which the *Quartets* are based. And the essay on "Johnson as Critic and Poet" (1944) is as good as anything he ever wrote in criticism, though admittedly it does not start so many electric hares as the earlier essays with their quotable catch-phrases.

THE LAST MAJOR FIGURE discussed by Mr. Gross is F. R. Leavis. If Eliot presided over the nuptials of Grub Street and the English Department, the position of Leavis, one of the first academic critics to concern himself directly with contemporary judgments, was hardly that of best man. For Dr. Leavis has sternly rejected the standards of the average "man of letters" without moving any closer to the standards of the average don. One often gets the impression that, for Leavis, the term "literary journalist"

will do as it stands for a term of abuse; when he has said that a man is a literary journalist he has placed him, for ever, in outer darkness. On the other hand, the academic who never risks a judgment on new literature is also a clay-pigeon for his rifle. So that Leavis, who has worked within the university and spread his convictions largely by teaching, and has also edited his own magazine and gone in extensively for book-reviewing and topical comment, manages to make both these activities look suspect when practised by anyone else. Without pausing to discuss how far, in taking these attitudes, Leavis is right or wrong (and clearly, he has often had a good deal of right on his side), we may note merely that this pugnacity, this disapproval directed at both camps, must have had a great deal of influence in a period like ours, when younger critics have been increasingly orientated towards the university. Perhaps it has been bad (leading to name-calling and the imputation of unworthy motives on both sides); perhaps it has been good (reminding both dons and literary journalists that they have faults, and that they do not necessarily get rid of these faults by changing hats).

There remains, whatever happens in the foreseeable future, the Book. Literacy may decline, the oral/aural culture may be already on us, but mankind has too much sense to go back on the codex or hinged book. It is one of his best ideas: a simple, cheap, easy way of taking someone else's mind and going to sit with it in an arm-chair or in a punt on the river. Nothing can replace the book; which means that the people who talk about books, who sort them out and gossip about them and judge them as well as we can foresee. And however much he may give way to depression, I find it cheering that Mr. Gross will be one of these sorters and talkers; I find, on looking over what I have written, that I have not done justice to my sense of the interest and vivacity of his book. Most of the best things in it are asides, and indeed there is a sense in which the whole book is an aside, a gigantic footnote on essential history. But the writing of it must have helped Mr. Gross to get his own ideas into sharper focus; he must have put on a lot of muscle during the time in which he was wrestling with it; and one's expectations from him are now, definitely high.

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## AUTHORS & CRITICS

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# Misunderstanding Psycho-analysis

By Anthony Storr

SIR PETER MEDAWAR'S Romanes Lecture ["Science & Literature," ENCOUNTER, January] must, inevitably, compel attention, in part because of the author's position, and in part because few people are better able to bridge the gap between the two cultures. While admiring and agreeing with much of the first part of the lecture, I find myself in disagreement with some of the latter part. I realise, only too well, that it is a risky business to cross swords with a person whose mind not only works with the precision of a computer, but who is also responsive to and well-informed about both music and literature. Nevertheless, I must take the risk of being made to look a fool, for I think that Sir Peter's dismissal of psycho-analysis and what he calls "existential psychiatry" betrays both prejudice and a fundamental failure to understand what these disciplines are about.

No one will dispute Medawar's thesis, that "scientific and poetic or imaginative accounts of the world are not distinguishable in their origins." Nor will anyone oppose his contention that the scientific account differs from the purely imaginative at a later stage of their respective developments by virtue of its validation by the ordinary criteria of scientific proof. I notice, however, that he avoids enumerating what these criteria are. He merely states that the scientific account must correspond to "real life." Both a myth and a scientific theory may bring sense and order to what T. H. Huxley described as the "maze of phenomena"; but the latter, if it is to survive, must be shown to correspond with "the facts." Now, I am not sufficiently philosophically qualified to be able to argue about how far it is possible to determine

what "the facts" or "real life" are. But surely this criterion is not only insufficient, but also misleading. Is mathematics not to be classed as a scientific subject?

"A mathematician, like a painter or a poet, is a maker of patterns. If his patterns are more permanent than theirs, it is because they are made with *ideas*. . . . A mathematician is working with his own mathematical reality."

So wrote G. H. Hardy, and he went on to say that "neither physicists nor philosophers have ever given any convincing account of what 'physical reality' is." Perhaps, in Medawar's terms, "mathematical reality" is a myth. It must surely follow that many hypotheses about the universe, especially about its origins, should no longer be labelled scientific, but designated "mythological." Yet I fancy that the astronomers who advance these hypotheses and who find them useful, would resent the latter adjective.

PSYCHO-ANALYTIC THEORY shares with astronomy an interest in origins. Both disciplines have, unfortunately, to put up with the fact that the nature of their subject-matter is such that they have to work with hypotheses which cannot all, at present, be validated in the laboratory. If, instead of disparaging psycho-analysis, Medawar would bend his mind to constructing experiments to prove or disprove psycho-analytic theory, and if, especially, he could invent ways in which psycho-analytic theory could be used for prediction, he would be constructive rather than destructive. As it is, direct observation of babies and experiments with the young of other species are tending to confirm some analytic theory; but we cannot, for obvious reasons, expose human young to the kind of stress which might yield positive results.

Medawar goes on to say that psycho-analysis and existential psychiatry are "highly mischievous" because they "represent a style of thought that will impede the growth of our understanding of mental illness," and then proceeds to discuss imbecility. "Did its parents, by some involuntary withholding of compassion, fail to ratify the child's ontological awareness of its essential self?" he asks; thus imputing to some totally imaginary existentialist a theory to which he would not be such a fool as to subscribe. I am surprised that he should misuse his ingenuity by making use of so vulgar a dialectical device.

In choosing imbecility as his example, he shows that he makes no distinction between brain disease and "mental illness." This is a "category mistake" as I think Gilbert Ryle

DR. ANTHONY STORR's recent books include *Sexual Deviation* (Penguin, 1964) and *Human Aggression* (Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1968).

would agree. It simply is not true that psychiatrists, of whatever school, repudiate the idea of an organic cause of mental abnormality. Does Medawar seriously believe that, because I am an analyst, I would attempt to treat a man with a brain tumour, as I have been asked to do; or that I am not familiar with many other forms of brain disease from cerebral arteriosclerosis to Huntington's chorea?

But I am also familiar with the fact that by far the majority of neurotic patients whom I and my colleagues are asked to see are *not* suffering from brain disease, but from problems in living which are mostly tied up with difficulties in inter-personal relationships. One psycho-analyst, Thomas Szasz, has written a book called *The Myth of Mental Illness* (1962), which makes this point at length. Most of us have had some problems in relating to other people and some neurotic symptoms; but I hardly think it likely that Medawar would suppose that such difficulties were the result of brain disease or an inborn error of metabolism. It seems more probable that neurosis is the result of faulty early conditioning, and that the kind of problems one has in adult life in relating to other people are dependent upon the emotional environment in which the first years of one's life were passed, as Freud postulates. Harlow's work with Rhesus monkeys suggests that even so profound a mental disorder as schizophrenia would be discovered. I don't see any in the mother-child relation, whereas quite a number of analysts (including Jung) have thought it likely that some chemical cause for schizophrenia would be discovered. I don't see why Medawar supposes that scientists necessarily want there to be an organic cause for every mental disturbance. I should have thought that a good many biologists, including some of his own pupils, were far more inclined to believe that a good number of neurotic symptoms, including depression, impotence, and sexual deviation were the consequence of early deprivation or faulty conditioning. Does he suppose, for example, that the homosexual malarials at Lorenz's research institute are suffering from some organic physical disorder? Or does he accept that their disability is the result of the experimental interference with the normal process of imprinting which has been carried out upon them?

Validation of psycho-analytic theory is a difficult business, but it still remains true that, as I wrote in an essay which I suspect from the lecture Medawar may have read,

"Psycho-analysis is the only way of regarding human behaviour which, to date, possesses the twin advantages of doing justice to man's complexity and, at the same time, relating this com-

plexity to the biological characteristics which make him part of Nature."

As such, I am surprised that it should make no appeal to one who, after all, used to call himself a zoologist.

PERHAPS I HAVE ROOM to make one further point. It may sometimes be true that "literature tends to expel science"; a fault which could, with justice, be attributed to Jung, and to some existentialist writers. It is not, however, a charge which can be imputed to Freud or to his followers. I cannot read Freud's original German, but, so far as one can judge from translation, he is careful to eschew the "voluptuary and rhetorical use of obscurity" to which Sir Peter refers, and writes with simplicity and clarity. Moreover, he is well aware that he is sometimes forced to use concepts which are mythical, and uses the word himself in regard to some aspects of instinct theory.

I rather doubt whether literature does invariably expel science. Both Eddington and Sherrington were stylists, and the fact that they could write so well gave them an advantage when it came to communicating their ideas to others. Not even rhetoric *necessarily* interferes with detachment and objectivity. I am sure that there are people who will write obscurely on purpose in the hope that they will be misjudged as profound. Those who write with clarity are sometimes misjudged as superficial. But there are writers who do not disdain even rhetoric, and who have yet been acknowledged as authorities by other experts in their own field. Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* was regarded as a standard work for many years; yet the style in which it is written is both elaborate and rhetorical.

Nor do I believe that psycho-analysis claims "a deeper insight than can be achieved by laboratory scientists or historians or philologists." In fact, there are many analogies between the practice of psycho-analysis and the pursuit of history; and the latter discipline suffers from some of the same disadvantages in that scientific validation of historical hypotheses is often difficult or impossible. Psychoanalysts are at least as concerned with truth as are historians. If our discipline has not yet reached the dignity of science, there is no reason to suppose that it cannot travel further along that road in time, and some hopeful signs that the journey has already started.

Meanwhile, if Sir Peter Medawar or anyone else can produce better explanations of the development of neurotic characters which really do justice to the complexities of both human behaviour and human mental content it would be splendid. Destructive criticism is not enough.



# A Reply

By P. B. Medawar

THE FIRST PROBLEM I had to face in answering Dr. Anthony Storr's criticism of my Romanes Lecture was to avoid being distracted from its main theme by his own irrelevancies. Storr covers a lot of ground and expresses a number of opinions I very much disagree with (including the opinion that no one will disagree with one or two of mine). "Is mathematics not to be classed as a scientific subject?" he asks, and goes on to quote from G. H. Hardy. The answer is, no, not in any sense that bears on the correspondence of a scientific theory with real life. Hardy was speaking of *pure* mathematics: a subject which, in one view of it, is altogether devoid of empirical content, so that the question of correspondence with reality does not arise. Again, I don't agree that Gibbon's style was "elaborate and rhetorical" ("Oh dear" I said to myself by the time I had got that far); nor do I see what the charm and clarity of Eddington's popular writings has to do with the tension between scientific and literary allegiances in the behavioural sciences. Sherrington is a different matter. *Man on his Nature* is not a notable work of scientific philosophy, and it would be uncharitable to discuss his prose. Storr would have done better to mention D'Arcy Thompson, the greatest scientific master of the *bel canto* style, but neither the style nor the content of *Growth and Form* throws any light on the problem I was trying to investigate.

All this is really beside the point. Let me begin my reply by making it very clear that my criticism of psycho-analysis is not to be construed as a criticism of psychiatry or psychotherapy as a whole. People nowadays tend to use "psycho-analysis" to stand for all forms of psychotherapy, much as "Hoover" is used as a generic name for all vacuum cleaners and "Vaseline" for all ointments of a similar kind. By psycho-analysis I understand that special pedigree of psychological doctrine and treatment which can be traced back, directly or indirectly, to the writings and work of Sigmund Freud.

The position of psychological medicine today is in some ways analogous to that of physical or conventional medicine in the middle of the 19th century. The physician of 100 years ago was confronted by all manner of medical distress. He studied and tried to cure his patients with great human sympathy and understanding and with highly developed clinical skills, by which

I mean that he had developed to a specially high degree that form of heightened sensibility which makes it possible to read a meaning into tiny clinical signals which a layman or a beginner would have passed over or misunderstood. The physician's relationship to his patient was a very personal one, as if healing were not so much a matter of applying treatment to a "case" as a collaboration between the physician's guidance and his patient's willingness to respond to it. But—there was so little he could do! The microbial theory of infectious disease had not been formulated, viruses were not recognised, hormones were unheard of, vitamins undefined, physiology rudimentary, and biochemistry almost non-existent.

The psychiatry of today is in a rather similar position, because we are still so very ignorant of the mind. But the best of its practitioners are people of great skill and understanding and apparently inexhaustible patience; people whose humanity reveals itself just as much in the way they recognise their limitations as in their satisfaction when a patient gets better in their care. Storr did not accuse me of disparaging psychological medicine, but I am defending myself to make it clear that to express dissatisfaction with psycho-analysis is not to depreciate the great and growing importance of psychiatry as a whole.

BEFORE I TURN to psycho-analysis itself, I shall do my best to analyse and clarify the supposed antithesis between brain disease and mental illness—the subject that led Storr to suggest that I had made a "category mistake." Of course I don't think Storr would knowingly attempt to treat a brain tumour or a case of Huntington's Chorea by psycho-analytic methods, but he may not realise the degree to which he is being wise after the event. Being a sensible man he naturally repudiates the idea of treating those psychological ailments of which physical causes are, in general terms, already known. But psychoanalysts do treat and speculate upon the origins of schizophrenic conditions and manic-depressive psychoses. *These* are the test cases: what are we to make of *them*?

I SHALL BEGIN with what may appear to be a digression. As recently as 30 years ago, many geneticists were still worried and confused by the problem of assessing, in precise terms, the relative contributions of nature and nurture—of heredity and environment or upbringing—to the overt ("phenotypic") differences between our mental and physical constitutions and capabilities. Both nature and nurture exer-

cise an influence, of course; but L. T. Hogben and J. B. S. Haldane were the first to make it publicly clear that there is no *general* solution of the problem of estimating the size of contribution made by each. The reason is that the size of the contribution made by nature is itself a function of nurture. (I use the word "function" in its mathematical sense.) If someone constitutionally lacks the ability to synthesise an essential dietary substance, say *X*, then the contribution made by heredity to the difference between himself and his fellow men will depend on the environment in which they live. If *X* is abundant in the food he normally has access to, his inborn disability will put him at no disadvantage and may not be recognised at all; but if *X* is in short supply or lacking, then he will become ill or die. The same reasoning applies to other, much more complicated examples. If people live a simple pastoral life that makes little demand on their resourcefulness and ingenuity, inherited differences of intellectual capability may not make much difference to their behaviour; but it is far otherwise if they live a difficult and intellectually demanding life. How often has it not been said that the stress of modern living raises the threshold of competence below which people can no longer keep up or make the grade? This is not to deny that some differences between us are for all practical purposes wholly genetic, wholly inborn. A person's blood group is described as "inborn" not just because it is specified by his genetic make-up, but because (with certain known exceptions) there is no environment capable of supporting life in which that specification will not be carried out. We shall not go far wrong, however, if we treat these cases as exceptional. Most differences between us are determined both by nature and by nurture, and their contributions are not fixed, but vary in dependence on each other.<sup>1</sup>

WITH THIS ANALOGY IN MIND, let me now turn to psychological disorders, which—to beg no questions—I shall define as conditions which cause a person to seek, or need, or be directed towards the care of a psychiatrist. Here too, as a first approximation, it will be reasonable to assume that both "mental" and "organic" states or agencies contribute to the difference between the psychiatrist's patient and his fellow men; but here too we should be very cautious in our attempts to assign precise values to the contributions made by each. Storr repudiates the idea of

a psycho-analytical treatment of brain tumours, because they seem so obviously organic in origin; but even in this extreme case we mustn't be too sure. Many of us now believe that there exists a natural defensive mechanism against tumours which is of essentially the same kind as that which prohibits the transplantation of tissues between one individual and another. If these natural defences are indeed immunological in nature, they are open to influences of a kind that common sense will classify as mental, e.g., to prolonged frustration, unhappiness, distress, or indifference to living. (The psychosomatic element in tuberculosis is specially relevant here, because the natural defence against tuberculosis depends on immunological mechanisms of a very similar kind.)

To go now to the other extreme: Storr thinks it probable that "neurosis is the result of faulty early conditioning" rather than of brain disease or an inborn error of metabolism. No doubt; but does he not also think that constitutional or organic influences may raise or lower the susceptibility of his patients to these disturbing influences? Of course he does—and so did Freud. It is normally a mistake, I suggest, to trace any psychological disorder to wholly mental or wholly organic causes. Both contribute, though sometimes to very unequal degrees, and the contribution made by one will be a function of the contribution made by the other.

It is, nevertheless, very understandable that psychiatrists should approach their patients with two rather different kinds of etiological purpose and interest in mind. Psychiatrist *A* will say, "My interest lies in trying to see how a certain pattern of upbringing, environment, habits of life and human relationships may predispose people of certain constitutions to psychological disorders." Psychiatrist *B* will say, "Now *my* interest lies in trying to identify those elements of heredity and organic constitution which make a man specially likely to contract a certain psychological disorder if he is influenced by the environment and his fellow men in certain ways." Both attitudes seem very reasonable, and over much of the territory that belongs to them the two psychiatrists will not compete. But—and now I come to my main point—in the context of those serious psychological disorders that are still disputed territory, the methodology implicit in the attitude of Psychiatrist *B* is very much the more powerful.

The reason is this. A physical abnormality can be the subject of diagnosis, and therefore in principle of treatment, *before* it can contribute to a psychological disturbance. The recognition early in life of a certain physical abnormality (say, the chromosomal constitution *YYY*, to quote an example not yet fully worked out)

<sup>1</sup> To speak (as I do here and below) of the causes of *differences* between human beings sounds clumsy and takes some getting used to; but there seems to be no avoiding it if one is to be precise and at the same time avoid a formal symbolic treatment.

defines *a priori* a category of men who are at special risk; and our foreknowledge of that risk can be made the basis of a rational system of avoidance. The physical disability represents a parameter of the situation, where upbringing and environment can be varied within certain limits of our discretion. A difficult enterprise, to be sure; but not so difficult and much more realistic than, say, to abolish all family life, as one "existential psychiatrist" is alleged to have recommended, because some families create an environment conducive to mental disorder. With certain forms of low-grade mental deficiency, this programme is now adopted as a matter of routine. When tests carried out on a baby's urine suggest that it cannot metabolise the amino-acid phenylalanine, its diet can be altered in such a way as to prevent what might otherwise be serious and cumulative damage to the brain. I hope and expect that cognate solutions will one day be found for the major psychoses. No matter what other factors may have influenced him, there is something physically wrong with a manic depressive patient, and it is essential to find out what it is.

This completes my attempt to explain why I think that the categorical distinction Storr draws between brain disease and mental illness is a fundamentally unsound one—the remnant of an effete dualism, a still further perpetuation of what Ryle called the legend of Two Worlds. Storr referred to "category mistakes" in a way that made me wonder if he quite understood what Ryle was getting at, for his criticism of my lecture seems to embody the very errors of reasoning against which Ryle was putting us on our guard.

I NOW TURN TO psycho-analysis itself, taken in the sense I gave it in an earlier paragraph. I shall not attempt a systematic treatment, but shall merely draw attention to a few of its more serious methodological, doctrinal and practical defects.

The property that gives psycho-analysis the character of a mythology is its combination of conceptual barrenness with an enormous facility in explanation. To criticise a theory because it explains everything it is called on to explain sounds paradoxical, but anyone who thinks so should consult the discussion by Karl R. Popper in *Conjectures and Refutations* (1963), particularly the passages (pp. 34–39) that make mention of psycho-analysis itself. Let me illustrate the point by a number of passages chosen from the authors' summaries of their own contributions to the 23rd International Psycho-analytical Congress held in Stockholm in 1963. I choose the Proceedings of a Congress rather than the work of a

single author so as to get a cross-section of psycho-analytic thought.

"Character-traits are formed as precipitates of mental processes. They originate in innate properties; they come into existence in the mutual interplay of ego, id, super-ego and ego-ideal, under the influence of object-relations and environment."

"When an individual strikes out at his wife, his child, his acquaintances or even complete strangers, we may well suspect that a gross failure in Ego-functioning has occurred. Its restraining control has been partially eluded."

Of a cyclothymic patient in the 5th and 6th years of psycho-analytic treatment:

"... the delusion of having black and frightening eyes took the centre of the analytic stage following the resolution of some of the patient's oral-sadistic conflicts. It proved to be a symptom of voyeuristic tendencies in a split-off masculine infantile part of the self and yielded slowly to reintegration of this part, passing through phases of staring, looking at and admiring the beauty of women."

On the etiology of anti-Semitism:

"The Oedipus complex is acted out and experienced by the anti-Semite as a narcissistic injury, and he projects this injury upon the Jew who is made to play the role of the father. . . . His choice of the Jew is determined by the fact that the Jew is in the unique position of representing at the same time the all-powerful father and the father castrated. . . ."

On the role of snakes in the dreams and fantasies of a sufferer from ulcerative colitis:

"The snake represented the powerful and dangerous (strangling), poisonous (impregnating) penis of his father and his own (in its anal-sadistic aspects). At the same time, it represented the destructive, devouring vagina. . . . The snake also represented the patient himself in both aspects as the male and female and served as a substitute for people of both sexes. On the oral and anal levels the snake represented the patient as a digesting (pregnant) gut with a devouring mouth and expelling anus. . . ."

I have not chosen these examples to poke fun at them, but simply to illustrate the olympian glibness of psycho-analytic thought. The contributors to this Congress were concerned with homosexuality, anti-Semitism, depression, and manic and schizoid tendencies; with *difficult* problems, then—far less easy to grapple with or make sense of than anything that confronts us in the laboratory. But where shall we find the evidence of hesitancy or bewilderment, the avowals of sheer ignorance, the sense of groping and incompleteness which informs an inter-

national congress of, say, physiologists or biochemists? A lava-flow of *ad hoc* explanation pours over and around all difficulties, leaving only a few smoothly rounded prominences to mark where they might have lain. Surely the application of psycho-analytic methods in a completely alien culture might give even the most sanguine practitioner reason to pause? Not a bit of it. We have the word of two of the contributors to the Congress that "the usual technique and theory of psycho-analysis were found to be applicable to obtain an understanding of the inner life" of the Dogon peoples in Mali:

"A 24-year-old Dogon man, who at the beginning had met the white stranger with profound distrust, was led to change his views with surprising speed.

"After first having built a subsidiary transference and involved a younger colleague in the analysis, he turned from the animate object to the inanimate (playing with sticks) and from this to tactile gestures. . . . Finally he 'regressed' to somatic forms of expression in that he continued the analytic exchange by urinating. . . ."

THE EXAMPLES I HAVE CHOSEN ABOVE, and the psycho-analytic autopsies I shall mention later, illustrate another important methodological defect of psycho-analytic theory. If an explanation or interpretation of a phenomenon or state of affairs is to be fully satisfying and actable-on, it must have a special, not merely a general relevance to the problem under investigation. It must be rather specially an explanation of whatever it is we want to explain, and not also an explanation of a great many other, perhaps irrelevant things as well.

For example: if a patient cannot retain salt in his body, it is not good enough (though it will probably not be wrong) to say that his endocrine system is in disorder, because such an explanation would cover a multitude of other abnormalities besides. The explanation may well be that the patient is no longer producing aldosterone, a specific hormone of the cortex of the adrenal gland, and if that is so he can probably be cured. Again, it will not do to say that

muscular contraction is a transformation of energy derived originally from the sun. This is a weak explanation; it is too far removed in the pedigree of causes; we are more interested in the causal parentage of the phenomenon than in its causal ancestry. Strong explanations have a quality of special relevance, of logical immediacy; and this is a quality they must have if they are to be tested and shown to be acceptable or, as the case may be, unsound. Psycho-analytic explanations are invariably weak explanations in just this sense.

"Validation of psycho-analytic theory is a difficult business," Storr says, though he betrays no logical understanding of why it is so; and by implication he suggests that, instead of criticising it destructively, I should help find means of testing whether or not it is true. Alas—except in one respect, which I shall deal with in a moment, the methodological obstacles are insuperable. Indeed, psycho-analysis has now achieved a complete intellectual closure: it explains even why some people disbelieve in it. But this accomplishment is self-defeating, for in explaining why some people don't believe in it, it has deprived itself of the power to explain why other people do. The ideas of psycho-analysis cannot both be an object of critical scrutiny and at the same time provide the conceptual background of the method by which that scrutiny is carried out.

It is for this reason that the notion of *cure* is methodologically so important. It provides the only criterion by which the validity of psycho-analytic notions can be judged. This is why cure is such an embarrassment for "cultural" psychiatry in general. No wonder its practitioners try to talk us out of it<sup>2</sup>; no wonder they prefer to see themselves as the agents of some altogether more genteel ambition, *e.g.*, to give the patient a new insight through a new deep, inner understanding of himself. But let us not be put off. Some people get better *under* psycho-analytic treatment, of course; but do they get better as a specific consequence of psycho-analysis as such? I cannot condense the answer I gave in *The Art of the Soluble*, and therefore reproduce it here:

A young man full of anxieties and worries may seek treatment from a psycho-analyst, and after eighteen months' or two years' treatment find himself much improved. Was psycho-analytic treatment responsible for the cure? One cannot give a confident answer unless one has reasonable grounds for thinking.

(a) that the patient would not have got better anyway;

(b) that a treatment based on quite different or even incompatible theoretical principles, *e.g.*, the theories of a rival school of psycho-therapists, would not have been equally effective; and

<sup>2</sup> "Curing is so ambiguous a term," says Dr. David Cooper in *Psychiatry and Anti-Psychiatry*; "one may cure bacon, hides, rubber, or patients. Curing usually implies the chemical treatment of raw materials so that they may taste better, be more useful, or last longer. Curing is essentially a mechanistic perversion of medical ideals that is quite opposite in many ways to the authentic tradition of healing." Somewhat similar views are to be found in the writings of R. D. Laing, Michel Foucault, and J. Lacan.

(c) that the cure was not a by-product of the treatment. The assurance of a regular sympathetic hearing, the feeling that somebody is taking his condition seriously, the discovery that others are in the same predicament, the comfort of learning that his condition is explicable (which does not depend on the explanation's being the right one)—these factors are common to most forms of psychological treatment, and the good they do must not be credited to any one of them in particular. At present there is no convincing evidence that psycho-analytic treatment as such is efficacious, and unless strenuous efforts are made to seek it the entire scheme of treatment will degenerate into a therapeutic pastime for an age of leisure.

The lack of good evidence of the specific therapeutic effectiveness of psycho-analysis is one of the reasons why it has not been received into the general body of medical practice. A layman might be inclined to say that we should give it time, for doctors are conservative people and ideas so new take ages to sink in. But it is only on a literary time scale that Freudian ideas are new. By the standards of current medical practice they have an almost antiquarian flavour. Many of Freud's principles were formulated before the recognition of inborn errors of metabolism, before the chromosomal theory of inheritance, before even the rediscovery of Mendel's laws. Hormones were unheard of when Freud began to propound his doctrines, and the mechanism of the nervous impulse, of which we now have a pretty complete understanding, was quite unknown.

NEVERTHELESS, PSYCHO-ANALYSTS ARE WONT to say that Freud's work carried conviction because it was so firmly grounded on basic biological principles. Storr seems to imply as much when he reproaches "one who, after all, used to call himself a zoologist" with not perceiving the degree to which psycho-analysis relates man's complexity to "the biological characteristics which make him part of Nature." I am therefore sorry to have to express the professional opinion that many of the germinal ideas of psycho-analysis are profoundly unbiological, among them the "death-wish," the underlying assumption of an extreme fragility of the mind, the systematic depreciation of the genetic contribution to human diversity, and the interpretation of dreams as "one member of a class of abnormal psychical phenomena." Storr is thinking, I suppose of the developments of modern ethology, a subject which, with the eclecticism of many modern psychologists, he is trying to integrate into psycho-analytic theory. Here I have to

defend myself on professional grounds. As a practising biologist I have always done my utmost to promote the study of ethology in this country (Tinbergen and his pupils, some of whom were also my pupils, will bear me out). Moreover, my fellow biologists and I were all agog with the psychological implications of ethological analysis long before it became a commonplace of modern intellectual prattle.

I SAID EARLIER THAT the mythological status of psycho-analytic theory revealed itself in its combination of ingenuity with conceptual barrenness, a property to which I have not yet referred. Ever since Freud's factually erroneous analysis of Leonardo, psycho-analysts have tried their hand at interpreting the life and work of men of genius, and many of the great figures of history have been disinterred and brought to the post-mortem slab. The fiasco of Darwin's retrospective psycho-analysis has already been held up to ridicule.<sup>3</sup> But, Darwin apart, how can we not marvel at the way in which the whole exuberant variety of human genius can be explained by the manipulation of a handful of germinal ideas—the Oedipus complex, the puzzlement of discovering that not everyone has a penis, a few unspecified sado-masochistic reveries, and so on: surely we need a more powerful armoury than this? Evidently we do, for these analyses always stop short of explaining why genius took the specific form that interests us. Freud does not profess to tell us why Leonardo became an artist. "Just here our capacities fail us," he says, with a modesty not found in the writings of his successors; but it is hard not to feel let down.

A critique of psycho-analysis is, in the outcome, never much more than a skirmish, because (as I tried to explain) its doctrines are so cunningly insulated from the possibility of disbelief. It is nevertheless customary to end any such critique with a spaciouly worded acknowledgment of our indebtedness to Freud himself. We recognise his enlargement of the sensibilities of physicians, his having opened up a new area of human speculation, his freeing us from the confinements of prudery and self-righteousness, etc. There is some truth in all of this. There is some truth in psycho-analysis too, as there was in Mesmerism and in phenology (e.g., the concept of localisation of function in the brain). But, considered in its entirety, psycho-analysis won't do. It is an end-product, moreover, like a dinosaur or a zeppelin; no better theory can ever be erected on its ruins, which will remain for ever one of the saddest and strangest of all landmarks in the history of 20th-century thought.

<sup>3</sup> In *The Art of the Soluble* (1967), pp. 60–67.

## LETTERS

### Steiner's "Language Animal"

GEORGE STEINER's thought-provoking article "The Language Animal" in your August issue deserves comment on a certain point which I consider naïve. After much stimulating discussion about the nature of human speech, Steiner winds up one section of his article with his forceful pronouncement: "But I repeat: no information theory, no model of the growth into being of human consciousness, will be convincing until it accounts for the profoundly startling, 'anti-economic' multiplicity of languages spoken on this crowded planet." This declaration is so ultimate in its demands that it cannot go unremarked.

There is a universal tendency of human beings to group together, and sometimes this is accompanied not only by previously existing common interests and traits, but actually gives rise to the creation of new ones which, particularly with fabricated special or peculiar traits, act as a binding force for the group. One such product of exclusiveness in human societies is the wide variety of language spoken by mankind. The spoken vernacular varies from group to group largely because of a desire for exclusiveness. Groups wish to remain groups and if no one else speaks a group's language but members of the group then the group is secure as a group, at least in that area. This is not as often true of written language, however. In China the same written characters are used all over China and are comprehensible to all literate people, but each province has its own spoken vernacular which attaches to the same universal written characters and yet when spoken is incomprehensible to a person from another province, even though on paper anyone may communicate with anyone else quite clearly by writing.

People who are literate within geographically reasonable areas and who share racial and other traits, as all Chinese do, form a group on a level transcendent of ordinary everyday living. Such a literate group shares a means of communication—as, namely, written Chinese. But for purposes of ordinary everyday living, more local and exclusive groups become successively important (in a descending scale down to the most immediate—such as a husband and wife's private idiom and special names for objects, which is most immediate and important when husband and wife are alone—and its idiom will be used at this most basic and immediate level and only supplanted by family idiom or village idiom when these higher levels apply: a *pot* is called *pottie* within the family but called *pot* within the village and called *ware* by the regional manufacturer or called *goods* by the transnational shipper) and then these more local and exclusive groups exercise their claims, such that the Chinese of Fukien speak with nine tones and are incompre-

hensible to the nearby Chinese who may speak Mandarin using four tones or the southerly Cantonese who use five tones. And there are not only regional but class groups on a more local level than the literate group who share a written language: for instance, not only is a Lancashire man differentiable from a Somerset man by regional accent and dialect, but an aristocrat indigenous to London is distinguishable from a London cockney.

There is hence seen to be nothing inherently strange in "the profoundly startling, 'anti-economic' multiplicity of languages spoken on this crowded planet." The supposed anti-economic aspect exists only from the point of view of a transcendent group of cosmopolitans—scholars, businessmen, diplomats and others who are transnational and transregional in their interests and activities. However, as long as the vast majority of mankind remains preoccupied with more immediate interests concerned with ordinary everyday living, the "profoundly startling" phenomenon of lower-level group exclusivity will puzzle only those relatively rare (no matter how important) members of higher level cosmopolitan groups, be they ivory tower scholars writing learned articles about linguistics or handicapped politicians like the once-powerful Koomaraswami Kamaraj, who as former leader of the Indian Congress Party could not become President of India, and bowed to Zakir Husain, because Kamaraj could not speak Hindi or English and was thus on a national level disqualified for such public office. But the concerns of the K. Kamarajs and G. Steiners are not the concerns of the vast mass of humanity and until they are, the Kamarajs will be handicapped and the Steiners will be "profoundly startled."

ROBERT K. G. TEMPLE

London

MR. TEMPLE's gross generalisation about "a universal tendency of human beings to group together" may or may not be true. If it was, it would in any case support my own "amazement" rather than his argument. But the linguistic puzzle lies much deeper. As Wilhelm von Humboldt and others have seen, the immense proliferation and mutual incomprehensibility of human tongues poses philosophic and historical problems comparable, say, to those which would arise if the digestive systems of different races differed. The Chomskian model, as I try to show in a forthcoming essay, could account perfectly for the generation of *one* human language or of a small group of ultimately related languages. Neither transformational grammars nor any other speech model I know of accounts in any convincing way for the development of anywhere between four and eight thousand tongues on the earth. That this development has been economically inhibitory and socially divisive is a general fact. It has nothing to do with the alleged visions of a "transcendent group of cosmopolitans."

GEORGE STEINER

Cambridge

## Bonnefoy's Theories

AS THE TRANSLATOR of Yves Bonnefoy's poems, and currently working on the translation of his essays, it is only natural that I should pick up a slighting reference to him in Graeme Wilson's otherwise excellent article about the Japanese poet, Hagiwara. Mr. Wilson may not have intended the slight, but a reader, unfamiliar with Bonnefoy's theories, would deduce from two sentences in the article that these theories are worthless. The first of the two sentences speaks of "the probable worthlessness of contemporary Japanese imitations of Western poetic vogue-styles, which are themselves probably worthless in the first place." Then in the next sentence Mr. Wilson lists "the Western poetic vogue-styles" an obsession with which "result[s] in worthless Japanese poetry," and included in the list are "the theories of Yves Bonnefoy."

Perhaps Mr. Wilson is right in saying that Yves Bonnefoy's theories (which are propounded in essays of course, not in poems) are a poetic vogue-style, whatever that may mean—they have certainly been very influential in France and his poems may be having an influence in the several languages they've been translated into—but it is not Bonnefoy's fault if the theories are mishandled by minor Japanese poets. As Marx is supposed to have said: "I am not a Marxist..."

Far from being worthless, the theories are part of an ongoing *art poétique* that may well rank with the prose of Eliot and Valéry. True enough, Mr. Wilson says the poetic vogue-styles are *probably worthless*, but that hedging qualification enables him to have his cake and eat it, to slight in a genteel, adverbially and proverbially English way.

ANTHONY RUDOLF

London

## "Plus ça change, plus ça reste. . . ."

I AM SURE that by your occasional quotations from Tocqueville or Flaubert in 1848 you do not mean to imply that the current phenomenon of Student Revolt has parallels only in the French Nineteenth Century. Readers with historical memories will know otherwise. Perhaps there is nothing new under the sun (and now not even the moon).

I take the liberty of offering you two rather more ancient references. The first is from the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, where in Book V he records the circumstances (c. 400 A.D.) in which he left his teaching post in Carthage and preferred rather to teach in Rome:

"I did not wish to go to Rome because higher gains and higher dignities were warranted me by my friends who persuaded me to this (though even these things had at that time an influence over my mind), but my chief and almost only reason was, that I heard that young men studied there more peacefully, and were kept quiet under

a restraint of more regular discipline; so that they did not, at their pleasures, petulantly rush into the school of one whose pupils they were not, nor were even admitted without his permission. Whereas at Carthage there reigns among scholars a most disgraceful and unruly licence. They burst in audaciously, and with gestures almost frantic, disturb all order which any one hath established for the good of his scholars. Divers outrages they commit, with a wonderful stolidity, punishable by law, did not custom uphold them; that custom evincing them to be the more miserable, in that they now do as lawful what... shall never be lawful; and they think they do it unpunished. . . ."

The second is from a Goliard poem, "Florebat Olim Studium" and the scene in the accompanying woodcut seems to my jaded eyes as some kind of medieval sit-in. (The translation is taken from the recent edition by George F. Whicher, *The Goliard Poets*, published by the New Directions Press, 1949.)

*Learning that flowered in days of yore  
In these our times is thought a bore.  
Once knowledge was a well to drink of;  
Now having fun is all men think of.  
Today mere striplings grow astute  
Before their beards begin to shoot—  
Striplings whose truant dispositions  
Are deaf to wisdom's admonitions.  
Yet it was true in ages past  
No scholar paused from toil at last  
Nor shrank from studies the most weighty  
Till his years numbered more than eighty.  
Now boys you'd think were barely ten  
Throw off the yoke and pose as men,  
Nay, even plume themselves as masters:  
Blind lead the blind to swift disasters. . . .*

JAMES P. O'DONNELL

Berlin



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Edward J. Mishan

# The Spillover Enemy

## The Coming Struggle for Amenity Rights

"GREEDY MEN, abetted by a complacent Government, are prowling over Britain and devastating it," wrote Mr. Anthony Crosland seven years ago in a bitter and comprehensive onslaught on the erosion of the British scene, town and country. So, when the Prime Minister made him Secretary of State for Local Government and Regional Planning in the recent shuffle Mr. Crosland could—and indeed did—check back on his book "The Conservative Enemy" to find, gratifyingly, that he had himself proposed just such a Ministry to combat the neglect of years.

His name for it was the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, but its functions were identical with those he now has: to co-ordinate transport, housing, location of employment and development planning. But there are snags. His new department does not take over the executive powers of the Ministries of Housing and Transport. It simply acts as their overlord and Mini-

sters with such vaguely defined federal powers have often come to grief for lack of effective authority.

But if Mr. Crosland can really get to grips with his new office and if his machine can really make an impression on Britain, what sort of direction will he push in? "Although in this country we have had one of the slowest rates of economic growth in the world even the growth we have had has been achieved at an appalling cost in terms of the environment.

"I would like to redress this. For instance, the country does still slope down from the north to the south to an unhealthy degree. We have had too much laissez-faire over building in the past. I'm preservationist by instinct. But don't put me down as an aesthete who is only interested in preserving old buildings."

INTERVIEW IN THE SUNDAY TIMES

IF MEN REALLY BELIEVED they controlled their destiny, they would not talk of what the future would bring: instead they would debate the kind of future they wanted. Quiet skies, clean air, traffic-free towns, an unspoiled countryside, are certainly technically feasible. We could have the lot if we wanted them in earnest—and survive comfortably withal. What, then, prevents a major political party taking seriously a programme designed to create for us all "a green and pleasant land"?

The short answer is the power of myth over mind. In his novel *Chance*, Joseph Conrad

describes how the clue to the character of an age can often be found in a single word to which the age pays tribute. In the inter-War period, the word was *thrift*. Such was its hold on the imagination that, at a time of widespread depression and unemployment, people were being exhorted by Ministers to spend less in order to save the country. Today the magic word is *growth*, and it is an article of faith in the Establishment that faster economic growth is the sovereign cure for all known forms of social and economic ills. It is enough merely to hint that a proposed measure favours growth to ensure a respectful silence at any Committee meeting. Nothing, save perhaps "export performance," can vie with it in power to intimidate the innocent citizen.

The era has thrown up another word, *challenge*, a companion piece to *growth*. Indeed, the Common Market was floated into public favour largely on a wave of "challenges" that rolled over all specific objections and dissolved itself in streams of froth about "dynamic" long-

IN THIS ARTICLE E. J. Mishan continues his studies on "How to Change the System" which he began with "Some Heretical Thoughts on University Reform" (ENCOUNTER, March). Dr. Mishan is Reader in Economics at the London School of Economics; his latest book, "Twenty-One Popular Economic Fallacies" (Allen Lane The Penguin Press), was published earlier this year.

run advantages. However, when *challenge* is used together with *growth* it can be depended upon as surely as a two-headed penny. While *growth* is used to sanctify the claims of the technocrats, *challenge* pulls the carpet from under the feet of the opposition. This technique, often displayed in television or radio debates, is illustrated by the following dialogue:

TECHNOCRAT: The growth of automation offers enormous opportunities for increased leisure, enjoyment, education. . . .

PHILOSOPHER: But work is not pure disutility. Through work people find the solace of companionship. Even a routine job provides a sense of security and belonging. Again, a large number of people do find interest in the tasks set them by industry. And surely all men like to feel that their work matters to society; that they are needed. . . .

TECHNOCRAT (*quietly but firmly*): Ah, but man must adapt himself to face the challenge which automation poses.

And there you have it! The future is apparently pre-empted: and willy-nilly we must be moulded to fit in. But by a lucky coincidence it is all for the best however, provided always that "we move with the times," wean ourselves from green fields and uncluttered skies, and learn to love the computer.

The technocrat as "con-man" is, moreover, aided and abetted by the ad-man, who creates unwittingly, but none the less unerringly, a world of growth-spun fantasies. The ad-man is dedicated to fostering discontent in the hearts of men. By tapping repeatedly at their greeds, anxieties, envies, lusts, he seeks to bring

---

<sup>1</sup>I disregard here a veritable wilderness of ecological consequences of man's short-sighted interference with nature—many of them ably discussed by Peter Laurie in the *Sunday Times Magazine* of 17 November 1968, also by John Davy in *The Observer* (10 and 17 November). This is not because they are less important than the spillover effects treated above; nor because they fall outside the economist's purview. Indeed they can, and should, be brought into the economic calculus. There are rational and systematic ways of dealing with half-knowledge, probabilities, likelihoods, uncertainty, and ignorance. Whatever their imperfections they yield far more justifiable solutions than the present method of excluding consideration of all consequences save those pertinent to commercial gain or technological triumph. However, I confine my attack here to those tangible and familiar spillovers that are becoming increasingly intolerable.

their expenditure into line with industry's rising output of consumer gadgetry. And while the daily promptings of the ad-man impel them slowly to the belief that the things that really matter in life are the things that money can buy, they will hardly be noticing that the environment in which they live is becoming submerged in a sea of floating sewage. But let us look at another man's predictions.

AMONG THE MORE GLOOMY FORECASTS for 1983 made last year by Dr. Mark Abrams were a population increase of some 5 million, nearly 50 per cent more cars, uninterrupted aircraft noise. He was incidentally addressing himself to the Town and Country Planning Association. One might infer from this circumstance that the proper procedure was first to predict the worst, and then to make ample provision to accommodate it. Certainly, there was very little said there about *choice* over the future. Not that there is in any case much incentive for any respectable forward-looker to choose a pleasanter future rather than an uglier one when choice of the former, he can be sure, would be ranked below the latter by any index of Gross National Product. This index, as economists know, is an artless though effective device which can be counted on to register some economic gain for almost any country from one year to the next. For the principle employed is simply that of totting up the values of all man-made goods while assiduously ignoring all the man-made bads that are produced simultaneously. These bads (or "spillovers" as they are commonly called) include development blight, the erosion of the countryside, the accumulation of oil and sewage on our coasts, contamination of lakes and rivers, air pollution, traffic congestion, and shrieking aircraft.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, it is to these spillovers that our growth-minded political leaders should look for really gratifying examples of post-war growth.

To the economist, however, they pose a particular problem because the nature of a spillover effect—noise, fume, pollution, and the like—makes it difficult to fit them into a decentralised price system. When these noxious by-products of industry or of industrial goods are thrown off, segments of the public are constrained to absorb them and for the most part without compensation. A topical example is air travel which produces services for the passengers while simultaneously producing prodigious disservices, aircraft noise, for large numbers of

the population. And it is fallacious to assert that man has chosen air travel despite the noise nuisance simply because people have never had any critical choice in the matter. In weighing up the pros and cons of an air journey the citizen considers only the advantages of air travel as compared with fares. He can do nothing about the noise to which he resigns himself, accepting it as a feature of the environment over which he has no control.

Some choice could be provided by a system which offered to each of us the option of air travel at a price, along with the accompanying noise, or that of no air travel along with quiet skies: more choice still by a market that allowed each of us to buy air travel at a price and, quite separately, allowed each of us to sell our right to quiet at a price. For in a more accommodating universe, in which a person could somehow lock out these spillovers from the space surrounding him, he would be able to charge for admitting them into his private space just as the owner of private property charges for the use of it. But in the nature of the existing universe the prospect of extending the market in this way is just not open to us.

Let me consider, then, some of the methods put forward to control spillovers.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Though I concentrate largely on "bad" or unfavourable spillovers to the exclusion of "good" spillovers, this would bias the argument in the text only if it could be supposed that good spillovers are somehow to be offset against bad spillovers—much as the good features of an age might be offset against the bad ones before a judgment is reached. But this notion is erroneous. The larger the number of spillovers—whether all good, all bad, or equally mixed—the greater the scope there is for allocative improvement. Within a competitive setting, the greatest improvements are made by first tackling the more outstanding environmental spillovers.

I might add in passing that on a broad definition of the term there is apparently no limit to the number of relatively trivial spillover effects one can think up, such as person *A*'s envy of *B*'s new car or *B*'s new wife, his disgust at *C*'s body odour, his pleasure at *D*'s promotion or demotion. These spillovers are ignored by economists either (1) because the cost (in terms of time, effort, and money) of correcting them exceeds the potential gain from doing so, or (2) because the satisfaction or dissatisfaction experienced in this connection is regarded by society at large as ethically unjustifiable. *A*'s envy of *B*'s status or *A*'s sadistic pleasure at *B*'s suffering is not at present allowed for by the economist in framing economic policy, though in a future society they may well enter into the calculus.

### *The Price of Things to Come*

FIRST, AND MOST OBVIOUSLY, we can adopt a system of Government regulation. This is a scheme, however, which the liberal economist will frown upon. It extends bureaucratic interference. It is costly to operate; and it is likely to "overkill" the spillover. After all, it is better to have some of the good in question along with its associated spillover—for instance, some air travel along with some unavoidable aircraft noise—rather than go without it altogether. Pursuing this idea the economist comes up with a formula for discovering an "ideal" amount of the good, say air travel. Beyond this ideal amount of air travel there is less to be gained by some additional service than there is to be lost by the additional noise accompanying it: below this ideal amount of air travel, the reverse is true; more to be gained by the additional air travel, than is lost by accompanying noise. Although this ideal amount is always smaller than that produced by the unfettered market, the bureaucrat, it is believed, is as likely as not to reduce production below this "ideal," or even cause the industry to fold up by insisting on the installation of costly preventive devices.

If the liberal economist is, in principle, opposed to a system of direct controls, what scheme does he favour?

It goes without saying that he will give his blessing to any freely negotiated settlement. If a factory producing dye-stuffs starts pouring effluent into a stream it is likely to spoil the taste of the whisky produced by a distillery located further downstream. The distillery may cut its consequent losses by financing the installation of a purifying plant for the dye works or for itself, or by moving elsewhere. Alternatively it may bribe the dye works to locate elsewhere or to reduce the level of its output, and therefore its effluent, to a point at which the effect on the quality of its whisky is unnoticeable. Since such mutual arrangements are voluntary, the presumption is that both parties are better off with such arrangements than without.

But such mutual arrangements are practicable only as between highly organised groups such as the two firms in our example. If instead the damaged group is a large number of families dispersed over a wide area—the victims, say, of aircraft noise—such negotiations are not practicable. Any private person who takes the initia-

tive in an attempt to organise the victims of aircraft noise, in order to negotiate on their behalf with the air line authorities, must be prepared to incur virtually unlimited expenses and trouble while knowing that his chances of success are very slight.

In these circumstances the economist may propose levying a tax on each unit of the product or service equal to the social damage it causes. Such an excise tax equal in value, say, to the damaging spillover effects caused by air travel would seem to be satisfactory. So would an excise tax equal to the spillover effects arising from the use of the private automobile. In this connection, however, it should be noted that the system of taxes or tolls favoured by many transport economists is calculated by reference only to the mounting costs of time and fuel lost by the motorists themselves as the traffic builds up. In other words, given the existing road system, the toll or tax is to be regarded as an ideal device for rationing scarce road space. It is therefore set equal to the estimated loss of time and fuel (etc.) imposed by any one additional vehicle on all the motorised traffic.

One can agree that there should indeed be such a Traffic-congestion tax. But there should also be a Pollution tax. There should obviously be a Noise tax, and for that matter an "agony tax," too—even though the grief of a spouse or parent cannot be stilled by any sum of money. And come to think of it, 7,000 killed a year on the roads and some ten times that number crippled is quite a price for the nation to pay for its apparent preference for the private motor car over public transport. Finally, there should be a "miscellaneous tax" to cover a host of irrevocable consequences—such as the tendency of the motoring interest to produce cities like Los Angeles which, having dedicated itself to the automobile, now lies prostrate without heart or centre beneath the tentacles of its freeway system, or its tendency to transform the countryside into a wasteland cemetery of gasoline stations. If all such taxes could be calculated and imposed the problem would disappear along with the greater part of the traffic.

NOW WHY ARE SUCH TAXES ON automobiles not in fact levied? If he disregards charges of vested interests and political conspiracy, the economist might well come up with the argument that the fact of such taxes *not* being imposed is *prima facie* evidence that the mere

cost of calculating them would be prohibitive, or at any rate greater than the potential gain from some resulting "ideal" traffic flow. In other words, the cost of acquiring reliable information about spillover costs is so great that persistence with a tax scheme could result only in a net loss to society. This conclusion (which may be extended to other spillovers) is less plausible, however, if we recognise that the admittedly heavy costs of acquiring information arise from aiming at standards of accuracy that are unnecessarily stringent. Some rough work plus inspired guessing might suggest a tax resulting in a traffic flow which was, say, ten or twenty per cent off the mark either way. Yet the response to such a tax is likely to be a vast improvement over doing nothing at all.

ANALOGOUS REMARKS APPLY to the now fashionable technique of Cost-Benefit analysis. But while an excise tax aims to ration the use by vehicles of scarce roadway and scarce amenities, the question of whether or not to invest in adding something to the existing road system is settled by reference to the outcome of a cost-benefit study. And if the transport economist ever troubled to make adequate provision for the costs endured by society of the familiar spillovers generated by motorised traffic, it is certain that we should build fewer roads.

It is also important to realise, in this connection, that however the tax is set, or however Costs and Benefits are estimated, such economic calculation takes no account of equity. *Those whose welfare is adversely affected are not compensated.* This might matter less if such people were to be found among the wealthier groups in society. But the reverse is more likely to be the case. Building a flyover through a poor neighbourhood—and they are seldom built through wealthy neighbourhoods—benefits motorists as a group at the expense of the welfare of the families in the poor neighbourhood.

Yet these inequities are not the end of the matter. If the motorists availing themselves of the flyover are *not* in fact charged for its use—and this is the practice in this country—their disposable income is not reduced. Since a proper estimate of the motoring benefits is derived from what motorists can afford to pay for any contemplated "improvement," it is obvious that if, instead, they were made to pay for the

facilities in question, the estimated benefits of investment in additional flyovers or road-widening schemes would decline. But, as indicated, motorists do not in fact pay taxes or tolls for these motoring facilities (other than an annual motoring tax, and generally as a taxpayer along with the rest of the community). The estimate of what they can afford is insufficiently diminished, and successive projects continue to *appear* economically feasible.

Be that as it may, by far the most serious defect of such Cost-Benefit analysis is that already mentioned in connection with excise taxes: a variety of damaging spillovers continue to elude measurement. As several conscientious economists have pointed out, the outcome of all too many cost-benefit studies follows that of the classic recipe for horse-and-rabbit stew which is made on a strictly fifty-fifty basis—one horse to one rabbit. No matter how carefully the rabbit is chosen for its flavour, the taste is sure to be swamped by that of horseflesh. The horse, needless to say, represents those "*other considerations*" which seldom take up more space than a sentence or two in a footnote, or in the preamble, against the expert's detailed and quantitative analysis which is the scientific rabbit, one invariably having all the earmarks of exacting professional competence. On this recipe, standard for practically all transport studies, I should have no difficulty in producing impressive estimates of net benefits over costs for almost any conceivable traffic project in the London area, beginning with a four-lane highway through St. James' Park and a ramp over Buckingham Palace. The more the city is carved up and twisted about to encourage the use of the private automobile the easier it becomes, on the standard formula, to contrive net benefits by further highway investments.

TURNING TO A SPECIFIC INSTANCE, consider the attempt of the National Trust to prevent the Ministry of Transport from building a six-lane highway through Saltram Park, Plymouth. Notwithstanding that the land was "inalienable," the Trust suffered a serious defeat at the hands of Parliament. Members were sad to see it go; but, being "realists" they bravely turned their backs on sentiment and bowed to "economic necessity." Certainly, the Minister of Transport can produce convincing figures to justify his decision. And it is equally certain that the premises on which the calculations are based follow the horse-and-rabbit stew recipe.

The loss to the country as a whole of the destruction of rare natural beauty weighs only as a consideration to be borne in the mind of the Minister. In times like the present, where there is growing pressure to be seen going about doing things, this consideration is not likely to weigh too heavily in the balance. But is it possible to attach a figure to such intangibles?

The answer is: yes, in principle. A conceptually exact measure would add together the minimum sums each family in the country would be willing to accept to reconcile it to the destruction of this area of natural beauty. And not only each family now living. As the destruction of natural beauty is virtually irreversible, the loss suffered by future generations of families would also have to be added to the total reckoning.

Such calculations are currently impracticable. But even the most conservative guess of the total loss on this principle—which is strictly speaking the correct economic principle—would swamp any measure of net traffic benefits the Minister could come up with. By the same logic, a conservative guess of the social costs of the supersonic booms would be enough to reverse a decision based on a conventional cost-benefit study.

BUT THERE IS NO NEED to pin our hopes on guesses about minimal compensation to deliver us from further follies. For there is one simple proposal which, if implemented, would effectively check this rake's-progress sort of growth that successive governments have wantonly produced; and that is an alteration of the existing law. Change the law from being in general permissive of spillovers to being prohibitive of them and the justly admired market mechanism will tend to a solution that seeks to avoid spillovers. Under such a law the "unmeasurable" spillovers are effectively transformed, in the first instance, into legal claims for damages. And such claims enter directly into the economic costs on a legal par with payments for the use of other people's property and services.

### *The Market & the Law*

AND WHY SHOULD the law not be altered? To assert that such alteration "interferes" with the proper working of the Market would indicate a misunderstanding of the issues. After all, the term "market" in economics means no more than an organisation for the voluntary ex-

change of goods and services. It can operate, therefore, only within a legal framework that enforces contracts freely entered into. The most ardent advocate of *laissez-faire*, moreover, concedes the need for government "intervention" in the economy if only for the purpose of defending the realm against the Queen's enemies and of assuring the maintenance of law and order within it. Again, it is allowed that, in order to prevent debasement of the currency, the issue of coins and notes come under the strict control of the state. One can go further. Most liberal economists hold that the state should restrict free enterprise in other ways: on moral grounds slave labour is to be outlawed; in the interests of domestic peace the sale of fire-arms is to be controlled; on grounds of efficiency, and in order also to promote the decentralisation of economic power, monopoly is to be regulated and competition encouraged. The Market, then, is not regarded by economists as in itself desirable any more than private enterprise with which it is usually associated. For the more grasping and heartless men are, the better the Market will work. The Market is favoured by liberal economists on the grounds simply that it is a relatively inexpensive mechanism which, *when constrained by wise legislation*, can be made to serve desirable, though limited, social ends. And if with the passage of time and changing circumstances its operation is revealed to be defective in any respect our first recourse should be to the law.

It is interesting to remark in this connection that the arguments for extending existing legislation to cover men's rights to basic natural amenities are *no different in kind* from those used in defence of men's rights to private property, in particular those turning on equity and economic efficiency. With respect to equity, it is a cardinal liberal tenet that every man should be allowed the freedom to pursue his own interest *provided* that in doing so he inflicts no harm on others. The post-War eruption of environmental spillovers forms a classic instance of the most blatant infringement of this crucial proviso; an instance, that is, of severe and growing damage to the welfare of innocent people as a by-product of the pursuit by others of profit or pleasure, for which damage there is at present no legal redress of any value. For this reason alone the classic liberal doctrine could be interpreted to favour extending the arm of the law in protection of

men's rights to such basic amenities as quiet, privacy, clean air, unpolluted waters—though allowing him the option, along with other people, of accepting compensation from private firms or governments for permitting a designated range of spillovers in his vicinity.

WITH RESPECT TO efficiency, once the costs associated with adverse spillover effects are a charge on the production costs of the perpetrators of spillovers then, unless they can reach agreement with the affected groups, they have to desist entirely from producing the spillover-generating goods. Thus an airline company would have the option of continuing all its services provided completely effective anti-noise devices were installed, or, to the extent they were not completely effective, of paying full compensation for all the residual noise thrown on to the public. Under such a dispensation the costs of operating the *Concorde* over Britain would have to include compensation for inflicting on us a plague of sonic booms. As an economic proposition it would be a dead duck.

It is to be noted in passing that under the new law the costs of negotiating agreements with members of the public have to be borne entirely by the airline companies. If these costs were so heavy that the residual profit, if any, was too small to enable them to bribe potential noise victims to put up with even a limited number of air services, all air services would have to be withdrawn. And under an anti-disamenity law, the fact of having to do this would be regarded as *prima facie* evidence of net social gain in abandoning air services.

FOR ALL THAT, such legislation may not go far enough for at least two reasons. First, there may be insufficient information on the range of consequences arising from the spread of the spillover in question. A citizen who agrees to put up with a certain type of spillover effect in return for a bribe may do so in ignorance not only of the risks to which he exposes his person and his family but also in ignorance of the risks to which he exposes an unknown number of people or humanity at large. The unpleasantness he experiences surrounded by exhaust fumes may be only a fraction of the damage ultimately inflicted. Similar remarks are pertinent to other forms of air pollution, to effluents poured in river, stream, and lake, to the discharge of oil on the high seas, to the use of chemical pesticides and, above all, to the

present creation of radioactive elements by peace-time nuclear reactors.<sup>3</sup>

Secondly, there are spillover effects that are experienced not only by citizens alive today but by future generations as well. Some of those effects mentioned in the former category can be included also among this type of spillover.<sup>4</sup> Other outstanding examples are development-spillover and tourist-spillover, both of which involve the virtually irrevocable destruction of woodland, coastline, lake districts, and places of rare natural beauty and magnificence. In consequence not only is the present generation deprived, but the keen pleasure and solace offered by such scenic beauty is denied to future generations also. In such cases the State, in its role as custodian of the future, is obliged to overrule the narrower interests of any group of private citizens, and either wholly to prohibit or severely limit the spillover activities in question.

<sup>3</sup> "A new 'dimension' of hazard is given also by the fact that while man now can—and does—create radioactive elements, there is nothing he can do to reduce their radioactivity once he has created them. No chemical reaction, no physical interference, only the passage of time reduces the intensity of radiation once it has been set going....

"Wherever there is life, radioactive substances are absorbed into the biological cycle. Within hours of depositing [radioactive waste products created by nuclear reactors] in water, the great bulk of them can be found in living organisms. Plankton, algae, and many sea animals have the power of concentrating these substances by a factor of 1,000 and in some cases even a million. As one organism feeds on another, the radioactive materials climb up the ladder of life and find their way back to man....

"The point is that very serious hazards have already been created by the 'peaceful uses of atomic energy,' affecting not merely people alive today but all future generations although so far nuclear energy is being used on a statistically insignificant scale. The real development is yet to come, on a scale which few people are capable of imagining." (E. F. Schumacher, "Clean Air and Future Energy," *Des Voeux Memorial Lecture*, October 1967).

<sup>4</sup> According to a *Newsweek* report (8 January 1968), Professor L. C. Cole of Cornell University (in a paper delivered at the 134th annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science) asks whether man is not destroying the earth's natural supply of oxygen. He points out (1) that the increasing combustion of fossil fuels has greatly accelerated the formation of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and (2) that, in the United States alone, some one million acres of suburbanised forest and grassland each year lose their ability to regenerate the oxygen supply through photosynthesis.

I NEED HARDLY trouble to point out a number of preliminary difficulties, since one can depend upon entrenched interests to supply most of them. But no measure of radical reform can be established overnight. The practical problems of administration are solved only with the passage of time and with the accumulation of experience. What is required first is that, in response to widespread public demand, the principle of Amenity Rights should be formally recognised by law.

The subsequent and more detailed legislation which would result in industries having to set prices to cover their full social costs need not, however, trouble them for long. For they would now have a powerful incentive to re-direct their research into removing the chief technical causes of spillover arising from the operation of their factories and from the operation of their products. Following such legislation there would, for example, be an immediate market for noiseless automobiles, lawn-mowers, power saws, and so on.

Yet even prior to the passage of such legislation much can be done. Any government at all concerned with the welfare of its citizens can take the initiative in a number of fairly radical but realistic experiments. It can, for instance, make a start by promoting a scheme for a number of large residential areas through which no motorised traffic would be permitted to pass and over which no aircraft would be permitted to fly. It may be true (although I doubt it) that only a minority would care to live in such amenity areas. But the market under existing legislation will never present it with the *choice*. Municipalities in their turn could do much to improve the pleasantness of the environment simply by keeping motor traffic away from *some* large shopping centres at least, from narrow roads, from cathedral precincts, and from other places of beauty or historic interest that can be enjoyed only in a traffic-free setting.

In our larger towns and cities we could begin with a ban on all private traffic except perhaps for a taxi service (allowance being made for commercial deliveries during the small hours, say from 3 a.m. to 7 a.m.). In exchange, and at very much lower cost, the public could be offered a quiet, frequent, and highly efficient public transport.

No sprint in the growth rate, no stirring export achievement, could confer so immediate and palpable a benefit to the inhabitants of these islands as schemes such as these, radical enough



to restore some measure of dignity and humanity to our cities that have so long lain crushed beneath the roar and fume of motorised traffic.

### *A "Green and Pleasant Land"?*

IT IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE that the reader though in the main sympathetic to my views will, from habitual response to endless debate about export performance, gold reserves, growth indices, and the like, coupled with daily warnings about Britain "falling behind in the race" or "our struggle for survival," treat my arguments with half-conscious reservations. While admitting their force he may feel a distinction should be drawn between what is urgent and what can wait, and (uncasily perhaps) between a hard-headed or "masculine" economics on the one hand and, say, a "soft" or "sentimental" economics on the other.

The first distinction is obviously a valid one, but the familiar order of priorities is wrong. The day-to-day problems of managing the economy, the concern with industrial disputes, depressed areas, the level of over-all employment, indices of prices and production and—so long as governments continue to be wedded to fixed exchange rates—the balance of payments, have been the staple preoccupation of governments for decades and, indeed, have provided a good living for any number of economists, financial journalists and civil servants. Both the preoccupation and the industry that thrives on it can be depended to continue unabated into the foreseeable future.

The country's desperate need to produce more exports "vital to our survival as a nation," a favoured *cri de coeur* among our stout-hearted "realists," puts one in awe of the power of current myths. Exports, however, can be spoken of as vital only as payment for vital *imports*. But our imports consist not only of essential food-stuffs and raw materials. An annual average of between £300m. and £400m. of our imports is foreign securities ("export of capital"). Over one billion pounds of our annual import are luxuries, fashion goods, or close substitutes for domestic goods and materials—desirable perhaps, but expendable enough.

Whether a modern economy happens to have a favourable or an adverse balance of payments, whether its supposed growth rate is rising or falling, whether employment is increasing or

decreasing, whether its foreign reserves are accumulating or decumulating, there will be no respite from the day-to-day plotting of the ups and downs of a variety of key figures. Over time this snakes-and-ladders economics has so fascinated the players that they have long lost sight of the significance, if any, of the moves being made.

My other objection to this game is that it is played in public before a captive audience whose responses over the years have become so attuned that, like those of financial editors, their spirits rise and fall along with the latest figures on the chart. Let the news be of a further decline of our place in the international growth league, or of a decline in our exports, and people feel obliged to mutter darkly and shake their heads at each other in token of disgust and resignation. Let the news be of a record rise in real income or a bumper export surplus, and the atmosphere is thick with discreet self-congratulation. Since the direct impact of these events on our lives is slight—in the complete absence of economic reportage we should be unlikely to notice them or if we did so we should, in the absence of suggestions to the contrary, accept them philosophically—there is much to be said for the establishment of what might be called a Ministry of Misinformation (to borrow "Lord Haw-Haw's" facetious misnomer) to keep our spirits soaring. In our new and buoyant mood, freed from the sense of crisis and impending economic catastrophe, we might feel less ashamed to protest at the manifest deterioration of the environment and to insist that the government take action.

ECONOMIC CRISES, maxi or mini, real or apparent, have been the rule since the War, not the exception. In the circumstances we must regard "the immediate pressure of economic events" not as a mid-stream crisis that has to be overcome before the country can attend to otherwise worthy but less urgent proposals. Economic pressures and urgent crises are now apparently unalterable features of our society, something which will continue through prosperity and adversity, whether or not we make the legislative alterations proposed above and whatever the initial impulse they give to the indices.

THE SECOND TENTATIVE DISTINCTION, that between a "hard-boiled" economics and a "soft-boiled" or "sentimental" one, is not

valid. The impression, say, of a casual observer in the U.S. watching an endless stream of twenty-ton trucks hurtling through the night, from East to West and from West to East, is that here, indeed, are the visible manifestations of economic power and prosperity. The freight, however, ranges from dish-washing machines to electronic bugging devices, from electric tooth brushes to plastic baubles, and from cosmetics to frozen television suppers. Much that serves but to gratify the thoughtless whims of people slouched disconsolately before a television screen serves also as the foundation of vast industries whose outputs form a sizeable proportion of the nation's annual product. For in measuring the nation's output one does not rank goods according to any criterion of human need, nor does one weigh its utility as between rich and poor. The 25 cents spent on pretzels chewed listlessly in a cinema by some overweight matron enters the grand computation on the same terms as 25 cents spent on a bowl of soup by an emaciated pauper.

To this extent at least, the conventional economic procedure for measuring total product, or total value, is admittedly unsatisfactory, and the case I put could be strengthened by departing from it. Yet nowhere have I moved outside the conventional economic framework. If a person is, or can be made, willing to pay a dollar for a good *X* I infer only that it is worth at least a dollar to him; and that by permitting him to buy *X* for a dollar he will believe himself to be better off than if permission is refused. These are orthodox economic premises, and the logic raised upon them is equally orthodox. Thus, the spending of 25 cents on a packet of aspirins to *reduce a "bad"* (say, a headache) as compared with spending 25 cents on *acquiring a good* (say, an ice-cream) may have philosophical implications, but no *economic* distinction can be drawn between the two cases. It follows from this that *preventing* a person from acquiring a good is, in economics, on all fours with *compelling* him to receive a "bad." In either case he is constrained to accept a situation different from that which he would otherwise have chosen, and his welfare is reduced accordingly.

For all that, it can be observed that the liberal economist reacts sharply to the first form of "coercion" and remains comparatively unmoved by the second. If the state proposed to ban the sale of tobacco, or chiffon nighties, in certain areas of the country, the howl that would go

up would shatter the windows of the Palace of Westminster. And who would doubt that economists would lead in caricaturing the alleged rationale of such proposals? Yet if the State passes legislation which has the effect of compelling people to bear with disutilities of a serious order—or, to put it otherwise, to deprive them of the choice of such goods as "peace and quiet," and for all practical purposes without redress—the public and the economist are not unduly perturbed. How does one explain this asymmetric response? The hue and cry in the press in the name of freedom if the State threatens to deprive a man of the enjoyment, say, of pornographic literature, and the relative unconcern if a man is deprived of his enjoyment of the free gifts of nature?

THE EXPLANATION resides perhaps in a "misplaced concreteness" which, despite occasional disclaimers in our more civilised moments, tends to associate utility, or value, with market prices. But if all that is priced has value, the reverse is certainly not true. For this reason the economist interested in welfare can devise a rule for putting a price on those things that for one reason or another escape the price mechanism; yet a rule which follows in every respect the logic of the Market.

A worker offering his services to industry receives in exchange a sum of money that is at least sufficient to compensate him for the "bad" or "disutility" he has to endure—or, to put it more positively, for the good (say, leisure) he has to give up—the sum received being entered as part of the cost of the final product to which he contributes. By the same logic any person who in consequence of another's activity suffers additional noise, pollution, or other disamenity, should receive in exchange a sum large enough to compensate him fully for the "bad" or "disutility" he has to endure or, again, put otherwise, for the good (say, quiet and clean air) he has to give up. Such payments are also to be entered into the costs of the enterprise. Thus, the total cost of producing an article or service can be regarded as the sum of payments required to compensate others for the losses they would otherwise have to sustain.

If people are now prepared to pay for the finished product or service that incurred these "bads" or "disutilities" a price that equals or exceeds their total cost, one must infer that they are willing to pay enough, or more than enough,

to compensate all those who have given up something to make the product available. The economic rationale of the commercial rule that price equal or exceed total cost is, then, simply this: that those who gain are able to compensate, or more than compensate, those who lose.

This "overcompensation" (or net benefit criterion) is the crux of the matter. It transpires that it is the only criterion of economic efficiency that is implicit in the orthodox literature on resource-allocation and is at the base of all popular techniques—cost-benefit analysis, mathematical programming project evaluation, the lot.<sup>5</sup> If any business enterprise is to vindicate itself as an economic proposition, it is ultimately by reference to this criterion. For this reason all the allocative arguments I make use of rest firmly on it. If the victims of spillovers, like the workers mentioned above, are fully compensated for the "bads" they are required to endure—or, put otherwise, for the "goods" they must part with—such compensatory payments necessarily enter the total cost of the product or service produced. And if the cost of the product or service so computed is covered by the price it fetches on the market then, indeed, the criterion is met; else, as under the existing system, there can be no presumption that it is met.

THE INTRODUCTION OF Anti-Disamenity Legislation of the kind outlined can therefore be regarded as an effective means of repairing the currently defective allocative mechanism of the Market so that it can operate tolerably well within a private enterprise or mixed economy. My main contention has been that of all the alternative methods so far proposed for correcting the growing allocative distortions of the post-War period—direct controls, group bargaining, excise taxes and subsidies under the existing law, or alterations of that law—that of legislation specifically contrived to bring commercial criteria into line with current economic criteria is easily the most equitable and efficacious.

<sup>5</sup> The interested reader is referred to Chapter 6 of my book *Welfare Economics: An Assessment* (North Holland Publishing Co., 1969).

<sup>6</sup> Though I have argued this in two appendices on the balance of payments in my recent book, *Growth: The Price We Pay* (Staples Press, London).

## *A Choice of Futures*

HAVING GRASPED THE ESSENTIALS of the argument the reader should have no difficulty in recognising the basic irrelevance of objectives turning on our trading relations with other countries. I do not argue that the proposed legislation entails "fewer imports" or "more exports"—if this could be shown to be the more likely outcome, I would not avail myself of its appeal; for in the context of allocative improvements it is neither here nor there. Nor do I argue here that there are far simpler ways of overcoming the apparent imbalance in our international payments position than those currently employed by governments whose horizons are bounded by ideological and political commitment.<sup>6</sup> For the simple point to be made is that, notwithstanding the present near-obsession with trade and currency movements, the state of the balance of payments does not, of itself, provide an independent allocative criterion.

Like any other market, that for foreign goods and services can be out of equilibrium for some time. Without disputing the importance of this market and (given the fetish of fixed exchange-rates and incompetent government intervention) the greater difficulty of restoring equilibrium there, the significant proposition to grasp is that, within an allocative setting, the country's international trade tends to an acceptable pattern only in so far as its internal pricing mechanism is working correctly—as at present, it is not. Once this internal pricing, or costing, mechanism has been corrected, through legislation designed to include the costs of all spill-over damage, any consequent reduction or increase of our imports can be fully justified on our economic criterion as an allocative improvement.

To the question therefore of whether or not we can "afford" anti-disamenity legislation, the answer is a categorical yes. And it is so, not for the more obvious reason that if we *choose* to live in a greener pleasanter land it is technically quite feasible to do so—provided we forgo in exchange some technological hardware. It is so for the less obvious reason that the increased greenness and pleasantness would be one of the by-products of a better economics.

If it serves to reassure the reader further, I shall hasten to dub my proposals "progressive" lest another call them "reactionary." If he likes it better, I can insist that they are "forward-looking" rather than the reverse, or assert that

they "face the future" rather than the past. Certainly the magnitude of the post-War eruption of spillovers is a new phenomenon in history, and it would be a novel departure for any country to introduce far-reaching legislation to curb them.

Yet there is perhaps more to be said for avoiding these tired clichés. The idea of using "the future" as a guide to action springs from a view of history as a record of man's inevitable progress from darkness towards light. Both the cause and the effect of history are thereby misrepresented. If instead we regard our destiny as something within our own power to control, and conceive of history as the outcome of choices made by men alone, we are impelled to assume a responsibility both for the present and the future. It should be obvious that we can discharge that responsibility more rationally if—ignoring popular debates about whether any contemplated policy turns clocks back or forward, or faces change or not—we seek only to uncover the full range of choices facing us at any critical juncture and pick our course of action only after a cautious assessment of the likely consequences, in so far as we can anticipate them. At all events, in putting the case for legislation against spillovers, I have turned my back on the ideologies of predestination, technological or otherwise, and have argued throughout as though we are, ultimately, free to choose the sort of future most congenial to us.

IN CONCLUSION, I hope I have dispelled some of the doubts in the reader's mind that the argu-

<sup>7</sup>He who will not concede this much may yet allow that the suffering of the more sensitive citizens could be relieved without undue expense, even under existing laws, by the Government making provision for viable separate areas not too far from towns and cities, areas in which complete protection against all aircraft and traffic noise was assured. .

ments I deploy against the official tolerance of adverse spillover effects are not every bit as orthodox and as hard-headed as are general economic arguments for establishing new industries, encouraging economic development, or building dams, tunnels, and bridges. It need hardly be added, however, that any movement outside the framework from which a strictly economic criterion emerges would only strengthen further the case for legislation against spillovers. Economic considerations aside, common justice would surely proscribe any self-regarding activities that destroy the amenity of others—at least in the absence of adequate compensation. A little further reflection about the world would suggest also that the incidence of the more familiar spillovers, aircraft and traffic noises and pollution, fall most heavily on the lower income groups who have not the wherewithal even to attempt to "get away from it all." The distribution of welfare is thus more regressive than the distribution of income. And, if we permit ourselves the luxury of value judgments, it may be asserted that it is more important to reduce existing avoidable suffering than to extend facilities for further indulgence; and that a rapid proliferation of technical gadgetry and plastic knick-knacks will not compensate for a rapid erosion of environmental amenity.<sup>7</sup>

A final word. None of the considerations broached above can be construed as an argument against economic growth *per se* but only as an argument against an insensate pursuit of economic growth that is heedless of the associated social losses. Alterations in the law which ensure that these social losses are translated into private costs will go far to bring social welfare into harmony with commercial feasibility. The least that can be said of such a change is that it would make economic growth somewhat less of an illusion than it is at present.

# Tryphon

I

ANYONE PRINTING *the papers of an ancestor judges his own blood. I am reviving the embers of James Buckingham Silk. I hope they won't prove him a posthumous fool, myself a renegade.*

*My great-great-great grandfather, James Buckingham Silk, of Vilna, visited the Levant in 1820 and again in 1842. He published in 1821 his Travels in Palestine through the countries of Gilead and Bashan, a notorious book during the winter of that year. After that he receded into the obscurity which, my grandfather once remarked, he entirely deserved. (From that judgment a grandson dissents.) Twenty years later he went back to the Levant, and in 1843 wrote his second book, Tryphon The Giant In Jerusalem, which recalls his meetings, that previous year, with people of note. It's a pity this manuscript was never published, and I propose to remedy this, if only because he included also communications of the poet Else Lasker-Schueler, who spent her last years in Jerusalem. If these extracts please, I will publish in its entirety Tryphon The Giant In Jerusalem. May my ancestor clamber from obscurity on the shoulders of that giant!*

II

THEIR CHIEF PASTIMES are sherbet . . . T and religion. Unlike the congeries of the Great Turk, these Sefardi wives are notable for continence. Sometimes they sigh towards the Dead Sea, where, their Rabbis feign, Madame Lot saltily shines. On clear days her mineral semblance is perceivable from Jerusalem. They regard her as the *Ur*-mother. . . .

Around Ramadhan, the Jerusalem Muslims assemble in the courtyard of Omar's mosque. They wear a plain muslin robe, and in this they pretend the motions of swimming. These mimed motions are laughable in the extreme for an Englishman, accustomed from youth to the licence of water. There is a kind of pathos in watching these natives of limestone, embedded like fossils in the region, rehearse gestures our children would flee at through their fingers. A fable concerning Muhammed explains this. When he arrived in Jerusalem he felt his extreme Dryness. He exclaimed he must first swim around Jerusalem before ascending from it. A River was provided and around this he swam, applauded by the townsfolk, who felt he was a Person of no common quality.

Another Myth associates the River around

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DENNIS SILK, *who lives in Jerusalem, writes:* Tryphon had obviously been waiting for some rich American collector. He was an engraving in a 17th-century continuation of Josephus. The book's price was marked in dollars. I looked at the engraving of this starry-headed, snake-fingered man, then put him back on his shelf. But he slipped out of the book and into the street. He solved several Jerusalem puzzles. Later I took another look at that engraving. I found I had added an *r* to his name. Formerly he had been the unlucky Egyptian devil, Typhon.

The German-Jewish poet, Else Lasker-Schueler, came to Jerusalem in the 1930s, and died there in 1945. She permanently haunts several Jerusalemites. The poet Amichai met her recently near the Central Bus Station. She was bobbing up and down, he held on hard to stop her flying off.

Jerusalem with the giant Tryphon.\* Tryphon was a Chimera who made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1837. Some say in 1839. In any case, all are agreed on his wonderful height, his sagacity, and his scaly skin which seemed more than human. Arriving at the town-centre, he set up a bench on which he placed the most diverse instruments. They included cogs of some great Machine, a human eye, a chameleon, and a skipping-rope, and kindness.

Tryphon also complained of the Dryness of the city, and he invented the River in which he daily refreshed his scales. Afterwards he would juggle with his instruments while the eye scrutinised him. Some termed him a common

## III

HERE IS Silk's second account of the Giant Tryphon.

... On this date Tryphon the Funambulist circumscribed Jerusalem on a skipping-rope suspended in mid-air. He pleased the air, to judge by an audible humming remarked on by the townsfolk below. He looked transparent: you could see the coursing of his honey-coloured blood, or sap. The Chameleon closely following him along the rope took on a very gratifying Honey-hue. His bench below, with its human eye which he left as a Janitor, or guard, vibrated throughout the ascension. The nearer citizens read an anxiety in the iris. On Tryphon's



Juggler, or Mountebank: others pronounced him a great Rabbi.

Around 1842 Tryphon as usual invented his River but on this occasion swam away with it, his scaly side burning the water as he fled. The eye swam steadily alongside him like a faithful Retainer. The townsfolk associate him with Tiche, or Fortune, the goddess of Aelia Capitolina. But this can scarcely be.

\* The "y" in Tryphon like a long "i" in Chimera.

§ I made a daguerrotype of Tryphon on this occasion. Exposure time was insufficient, and the Chameleon escapes the copper-plate. With his usual modesty he cannot be seen at the centre, top, although he conceals several inches of his master's hat.

descent I congratulated him heartily. It was a feat, I said, the greatest artists of Illusionism in Europe could scarcely emulate. Tryphon remarked only that it was not his dexterity of limb, however wonderful, but the spirit in him maintained him on his rope. I enquired for the Chameleon. When Tryphon laughingly raised his hat to salute me, I saw the modest beast had subdued itself to its master's hat-brim. §

## IV

SILK TRANSCRIBES an encounter, the following day, between Tryphon and a severe critic.

"If," the critic said, "you had walked two Inches above the ground, I could have ap-

plauded. But you show a certain Materialist bias in your choice of mid-air."

Tryphon was extremely discomposed, and the Chameleon lost his colour for some moments. "I see after all," said Tryphon, "that I was performing for Jerusalem. Had you made yourself known to me earlier, certainly I would have chosen those Inches."

"I fear you would have fallen," said his critic.

Tryphon and his Chameleon returned home in silence.

## V

ABOUT this time Silk received a communication from a Levant geographer, Cuthbert Halt, who had read "Tryphon The Giant" in manuscript.

49 Ramban Street, Rehavia, Jerusalem  
11 March 1966

Dear Silk,

I see you swallowed everything, you old gossip. I was here in 1836 and again in '38 but I recall no one by the name of Tryphon. Everyone met everyone in those days. I would have met him, I am sure. James Finn never mentioned him to me, and as you know, he cultivated a *very* strange set.

As for Muhammed: Did he swim around a river? Was there a river? No one mentioned it to me.

I suggest you are confusing Tryphon with the Baal Shem of Tiberias, who spent his nights on the mountain, howling, and his days crystal-gazing in the Tiberias market. Some say he howled because he saw the future. I do not know though I myself heard him howl in 1836. He moved me deeply. I howled with him. I suggest he is *your* man.

I enclose an extract from the predictions of the Baal Shem that he had printed in 1838.

I hope you don't take this letter amiss.

*Very truly yours,*

CUTHBERT HALT

## VI

HALT HAD CUT OUT the first page of the Baal Shem's address to the citizens of Tiberias. I give it here in the exact form he communicated it to James Buckingham Silk.

### THE BAAL SHEM OF TIBERIAS

I ADDRESS YOU among thistles. I am a mouth in the thistle-field. There is no correspondence between the sky and your souls. You are market-

produce, manured, fostered, picked for death. I know the wicked carter. Shall I save you from his wheels and jolting?

You are so many cabbage-heads, carrot-tops, pleased to fill the superfluous basket. You are the false heart of the lettuce, cold and wet, not delicious. I have howled for you on my mountain.

The soul of God stared through the window. He knew where to find me in your house. I was lost like a house-dog, a cat. So I peeled the skin of walls. I know holes in mountains.

I am the Baal Shem of my mountain, its good name. I nursed it as I would a dead child, fed it my breath, and now it is a live soul. If I fetched it down like a beast, it would tell you how to grow. It gave me its skin, I gave it my breath. It is the house of soul. I sleep all night and watch the breath of the mountain going up, altar-smoke, to God. Sometimes I am confused, is my breath the mountain? I do not know.

There are very few souls that go up. There are very few souls that go up. You are house-souls, window-of-glass souls, packets of dead seed that have no buyers. Horses are the Solomons of your generation.

I saw a cartload of souls. The carter in triumph rode by. Roots in his produce, I heard you crying. You cried for someone to capture the carter and the scope of his reins.

## VII

### THE CHAMELEON'S MOUNTAIN-JOURNEY

THERE WERE NO PARTRIDGES or fine scents inside this mountain, you understand. I knew we were on an errand for Jerusalem. The way was in and on. The insides of this mountain stank of dead skin, we were walking through a tannery of stone. The walls were littered with old dreams of miners, scratched-out plans for seams. I wept at an old pick.

When we came to the decaying root of the mountain, Tryphon coiled himself round it. He was in labour. The root shook and I heard a drip from above.

I wanted to run away but I couldn't. The only colour to hide in was the pallor of Tryphon with his coils round that root. So I stayed there in the pallor of Tryphon.

## VIII

IN SPITE of Cuthbert Halt, James Buckingham Silk continued to observe what he wanted to observe in Jerusalem. Around this

time he struck up a friendship with Else Lasker-Schueler to whom he had been introduced by the Chameleon. She sent him the following letter.

*HaMa'lot Street, Jerusalem  
10 July 1940*

*Dear Friend,*

Again I am not well. The coalman has been walking on my head all day. I said to him, Why bring that sack of coal, it's summer, I know you believe in Berlin but it's summer. Come by yourself. Only, Knock gently. He laughed and ran very quickly away, and I have been looking at that coal ever since, considering that coal ever since.

Yesterday I walked around Jerusalem, thinking, as you must know, of many things. Some of them I have told you about: of the king's veins in rock, his neck rising from rock. Try to remember what I said, I don't have to repeat it so often. Then a boy from some ungentle place threw a stone at me. It reminded me of that door you slammed. It was an insulting stone, expertly aimed.

Dear friend, I know you are cleverer than I, more patient. You are not the great-niece of poverty. Come soon. Try your Jerusalem friend. She'll not quarrel.

ELSE LASKER-SCHUELER

## IX

THE CHAMELEON was incensed by Cuthbert Halt's letter to Silk, and also by a slighting remark of Halt's retailed to him, I hope not by my great-great-great grandfather. He sent Halt his appropriate reply.

THE CHAMELEON TO CUTHBERT HALT

*The Sanbadria Caves, Jerusalem  
18 March 1966*

*Sir,*

I am the one you termed the poor little animal of the mountebank. You live among books, I among colours. I have seen on your shelves—but I have not been seen on your shelves—the journeys of Burckhardt, of Melville, of Molyneux and Lynch. Sir, you should envy my long journeys with Tryphon.

I slept among Tryphon's coils and in the eternal 8 of his hat-brim. I am his little royal animal and I inform you, Sir, Tryphon is no fiction though you are. I merged with inferior hues till I found Tryphon. I have seen a window asking to be remembered by him, a cobblestone pleading for his regard. He was a card-

sharper also, and shuffled the streets of Jerusalem. But the final ace, the secret, he kept *up his sleeve*. That ace, that secret, he woke up with in the morning, and laughed at the stained look of some barn where he had slept.

I will conclude, Sir. You lie to the stones of the town. All your twos—eyes, ears, nostrils, hands and feet—are liars. You dissemble the town. Tryphon assembled it.

*I have the honour to remain, Sir,*

*Yours very cordially,*

THE POOR LITTLE ANIMAL OF THE  
MOUNTEBANK

## X

### TRICKS OR TREATS

AN EYE OF Tryphon, an ear? The Chameleon offers him to the populace. The innocent snakes writhe away but they're caught. The town eats his brains. His hat floats down the river. Goodbye, everlasting 8. Yet Tryphon never hesitates on his trapeze, and the town is there because of the trapeze. It is lunch-time, and Tryphon is offered on a dish. The Chameleon walks round in subdued colours, bows. The sun-seed eaters of Zion Square try out the new taste. Yet it is a trick, a Tryphon trick. The funambulist is not opened by their teeth.

## XI

THE NORMALLY SEDATE Silk came increasingly to be influenced by the visionary conversation of Lasker-Schueler, of her companion and adviser the Chameleon, and by inscrutable Tryphon. About 1842 he became interested in the real measurements of a town, of those proportions which eternally elude your usual job-builder. He composed the following poem on the subject, which perhaps explains the rejection of his entire manuscript by a reasonably accommodating publisher.

### MEASURING THE TOWN

It starts with water. You take a plumb-line to sound the water. From that the stone comes.

I heard them dropping the plumb-line in water, they were looking for the right place to build a wall, a town. A town-wall is built by music, by hope, by the plumb-line of poets.

Who were the builders, the fly-fishers casting their line in hope? I saw those heads close together, Tryphon and Lasker-Schueler talking under water. This is the geography of ocean, to



swim under the foundations of a town, to that place in the sea where the wall starts.

Where are the foundations of the foundations? In the sea-mind of poets. They say to the builder, to the king, Put up a wall here, the town there, they give them the measurements but not the reason for the measurements. Oh no, oh no, not the reason for the measurements. The builder looks at them and swallows the question, he has his chalk, his tape, they the shape they fetched out of the water. What can the king do?

I saw them swimming and thriving, the two sea-beasts, stroking the spirit-foundations of the town.

## XII

**B**UT James Buckingham Silk went no further with his manuscript. He suffered the contempt of that linked beast: Cuthbert Halt and the publisher. Here is his last look at Tryphon.

... That afternoon the juggler Tryphon maintained nine separate crystal balls in the air. They allowed the sun in a fashion not easily suffered. My wife laughed to observe the mouths and noses of the many, directed upward as if to eat, or sneeze, these crystals of Tryphon.

After some thirty minutes, and tiring of this royal Game, he set the crystals again on his

bench, and now they were no larger than my son's fistful of marbles. . . .

This modest and gifted Chimera soon after grew disaffected. He complained, to my wife, that he played for himself in the middle of a great crowd. He had straddled the town too long till he felt it in his most intimate Coil.

It was now he swam away on his River, leaving the town a Dry river-bed for its speculations.

## XIII

**M**Y ANCESTOR'S MANUSCRIPT ends with the only surviving poem of the Chameleon.

### THE CHAMELEON'S FAREWELL TO TRYPHON

*"O I shall be as dead, mother,  
As the stones in the wall.  
O the stones in the street, mother,  
Shall mourn for me all."*

*Because there is no river in Jerusalem  
Do you think you are a mountain learning to  
swim?*

*You must swim past all the faces  
And laugh at flint.  
The only bruising quarry is stone  
Wanting to be water.  
The dead course of the wall knows you.  
Smile back at the handkerchiefs, swim  
Round the Turk-like wall of this town.  
The dry wave.*

Golo Mann

# Napoleon:

## A European Achievement?



WHEN I WAS a young student of history, the great drama lay only a little over a hundred years back. It seemed almost modern still, the beginning of one's own era. In the meantime almost half a century has been added, and a half century whose dimensions, quantities and velocities have driven the past deeper and deeper into the past. Moreover, these fifty years were not favourable to the concept of the "great man," because they produced so many great men, most of them of a revolting character. But by virtue of their trade all leaders of the people, all dictators and tyrants inevitably have something in common. Thus the nauseating impression left behind by the most recent was bound to rub off on to their predecessors. Nowadays we are more sensitive to the "*Faites fusiller . . .*" that strikes such an unpleasant note in Napoleon's orders of the day. We are more sensitive to the tricks of power, censorship, secret police, and propaganda; to the habit of simultaneously stirring up, fearing, and despising the masses; to the total lack of moderation that finally digs its own grave. Hence the myth has paled. In the 1920s day-dreaming youths could still identify

GOLO MANN is one of Europe's leading historians. His most recent book in English was his "History of Germany in the 19th Century." A son of Thomas Mann, he was for many years a professor of history in the U.S.A. and a lecturer at various German universities. He lives at present in Zurich, Switzerland, where he is completing a biography of Wallenstein.

This past year has been, of course the bicentenary of Napoleon Bonaparte's birth. The present essay was translated by Michael Bullock. The three drawings are from Gilray's contemporary Napoleonic caricatures.

themselves with Napoleon—an echo of what Stendhal's Julien and Fabrice, Tolstoy's Prince Andrey and Dostoyevsky's Raskolnikov had done before them. Today quite certainly no young person does so any more. Romantics and rebels choose other models. But anyone who seriously enters into these historical events, unprejudiced by what came later, will not so easily emerge again, in spite of everything.

If I were to say that the after-effects of Napoleon's work are still making themselves felt, that without him Europe would not be what it is, I should be uttering an historical platitude: the effects of the Reformation, of the *Imperium Romanum* are also still making themselves felt. It is impossible to imagine the closely woven fabric with any of its meshes missing. We must turn our attention to less general considerations. Without Napoleon there would be no *Préfets*, no *Recteurs d'Académie*, no *Inspecteurs Généraux*, in short the whole structure of the French State (which in our day is beginning to crumble) would not exist; without him there would be no *Regierungsbezirke* in Bavaria and probably no Provinces in Italy; without him it is conceivable that there would be no bureaucratised national States whatever in Central and Eastern Europe. This carries us into the area of speculation and in a double sense. Firstly, how can we know what might have been brought about after Napoleon and without him? And secondly the dividing lines between what was in the process of developing before him and what arose out of his rule become blurred—the dividing lines between the complexes "*Révolution*" and "*Empire*." Internally, Napoleon built on the *Conquête Jacobine*, externally on the militaristic policies of the *Comité du Salut Public* and the

*Directoire*. The *Code Napoléon* goes back to 1791, the network of the *Grandes Ecoles* to the Convention. The mass army already existed before him, already organised in "Divisions"; he added the *Corps d'Armée*. Belgium, Holland, and the Rhinlands had already been pressed into the French system, liberated and subjugated before he appeared on the stage of history. The Continental System (the blockade of Britain) had been in the process of formation since 1793; it was to extend as far as French power extended. And it is the same in many fields.

THE MOST AMBITIOUS HISTORIANS, Taine and Sorel, portrayed the history of the "birth of modern France" and the history of the war between "Europe and the French Revolution" from 1789 to 1814 in a single breath. Indeed Sorel grandiosely set out to prove that the Consul and Emperor could never deviate from the path that he had long ago mapped out for himself.<sup>1</sup> Jacques Godechot sees things differently in his recently published study,<sup>2</sup> an excellent product of the bicentenary: neither the revival of the war with England after the Peace of Amiens, nor the intervention in Spain, nor the march on Russia were inevitable in themselves; the Emperor was to blame; even in the summer of 1813 he could still have had an honourable peace. This is in keeping with Metternich's remark: "We wanted to save him, but the fool wouldn't let himself be saved. . . ." Personally I tend to favour Sorel's view; but proof is impossible here. The impulse which he imparted to the progress of events, the delusions of his later period are inescapably clear. What cannot be definitely determined are the contours of their effects.

Thus Godechot also can find all too many reasons for his downfall. At one moment it is his betrayal of the Revolution, which was also his own origin, his betrayal of *Liberté* and *Egalité*, his attempt to win over the old aristocracy, that turned the people against him while he failed to win over the aristocracy. Then it is his mania for being a great man, and his headstrong, bellicose obstinacy. Then again, it is the *blocus continental*, itself impossible to put into practice, which compelled him to march on Madrid and Moscow. Here he was once more on the path he

had mapped out for himself: the war with England, which he could not conquer, forced him to extend the Continental System. Reading a book like Godechot's we may come to the conclusion that the whole Empire was a nest of deadly contradictions and that at least the end was inescapably predetermined. In 1810 not only German metaphysicians like Hegel but also hard-headed Prussian politicians like Stein considered it entirely possible that the Empire would last a hundred years. Metternich was more perceptive, but he was rather the exception.

WHICH NATION, which State, contributed most forcefully to Napoleon's downfall? It is hard to say, since they all contributed. But let us venture to list them in order: England; Russia; Spain; Prussia very late, roughly parallel with Sweden; Austria even later but at the right moment; South Germany only when everything had already been decided and, as far as princes and ministers were concerned, very unwillingly. The fact that in German tradition the Germans are regarded as the true heroes of the "Wars of Liberation" is to be explained, apart from the national tendency to introversion, by geographical coincidence. Leipzig is in Germany; once the Empire had disintegrated in Germany it could not be held together in Italy, Illyria, or the Netherlands. In the catalogue of crimes against humanity of which Nietzsche accuses his countrymen, he writes:

Finally, when a *force majeure* of genius and will-power appeared on the bridge between two centuries of decadence, a man strong enough to weld Europe into a unity, a political and economic unity to the ends of world government, the Germans, with their "Wars of Liberation," deprived Europe of the meaning, the miracle of meaning in the existence of Napoleon. (*Ecce Homo*)

Judged in strictly historical terms this is incorrect. The Germans were the most docile, most obedient and, at least in South Germany, the most friendly towards Napoleon. This remained the case after 1815; it became even more markedly so.

Upon which nation did the Emperor have the most powerful effect? Again it is hard to say, because he affected all of them. Without him there would have been no Spanish Constitution of 1812, a constitution *à la française* although it was directed against him; without him there would have been no St. Petersburg Decembrists of 1825; nor Tarasov's struggle against the

<sup>1</sup> Albert Sorel, *Europe and The French Revolution* (Collins, 45s.).

<sup>2</sup> Jacques Godechot, *Napoléon* (Albert Michel, 1969). See also his *L'Europe et l'Amérique à l'époque Napoléon* (Presses Universitaires, 22 Fr.)

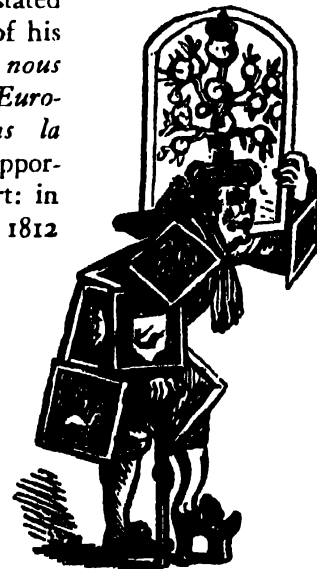
Turks. He gave the Italians their dream of national unity; he made the Poles lust after their lost liberty (of which he cheated them, compelled, as he believed, by politics). The list is long. From Peru to Persia there is not a country that was not somehow touched by his energy. But let me venture another thesis: he exercised the least influence on England, the greatest on Germany. England defeated him with her left hand, without any great sacrifice, prospered during the struggle and remained spiritually almost untouched. The Germans were blown off course. Not so much by the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire or by the simplification of their political map, as by the creation of States that were too large and too artificial to represent the old *Liberté germanique*, but too weak to be genuine States, so that they could not stand up to 19th-century nationalism. All this, in a different way, might have come about even without the Emperor. What Napoleon and he alone led them to was the cult of power, the idolisation of history and of success, belief in the right of the strong, spiritual tendencies that had been quite unknown to them in the 18th century.

It is foolish to describe Hegel as the "philosopher of the Prussian State." He was the philosopher of the Empire in much the same way as Oswald Spengler was the philosopher of the First World War. The Emperor was his "*Weltseele zu Pferd*" (World Soul-on-horseback), his "*Geschäftsführer des Weltgeistes*" (Business manager of the world spirit)—the great man who fulfilled the tasks of mankind and was historically in the right so long as he was successful, but not a moment longer. Mankind was living in hard times: but in heroic, profoundly historical times. "The epochs of happiness are in history empty pages." Here is the germ-cell of German historicism. What Hegel did on a universal plane, Clausewitz did as a specialist. His book *Vom Kriege* might just as well have been called *On the Napoleonic Wars*. The latter provided the author with his finest examples; from them he derived his concept of "absolute war," which anticipated that of "total war." But Hegel and Clausewitz together constitute a central element in Germany's intellectual, and also in her political, history.

THE IDEA OF THE NATIONAL STATE was inherent in the Revolution; the Emperor could not free himself of it. Consciously he fostered it only in Italy, and even there he took back two-thirds of what he had promised. The unification of

Germany, which he stated in Longwood would have been very easy to bring about, was not in his interest. He toyed at times with the possibility of dissolving the Danube monarchy, but spoke only of the "three crowns," Bohemia, Austria, Hungary, that is to say the historical units. He did not know the nationalities that lived under the sceptre of the Hapsburgs. The idea of passing through the great agglomerations of free peoples to the greatest European confederation—this was brilliant propaganda from St. Helena, foreseeing the longings of the 19th century; it was by no means Napoleon's reality as long as he was in power. The Second Empire had a lot to do with the gospel of St. Helena, less with the practice of the First. In the last analysis the Empress Eugénie, who in 1859 thundered against the new kingdom of Italy and in 1918 against the foolish new national State of Czechoslovakia, was closer to the thinking of Napoleon I than her deceived husband.

ALL GREAT WARS have contributed to a kind of unification of Europe: first through the military migrations of the nations (Spaniards, Germans, and Italians in Russia; Russians in Paris), then through the peace treaties. This is true of the Thirty Years War and Münster, and of the War of the Spanish Succession and Utrecht, as well as of Napoleon's wars and Vienna. Looked at more closely, Napoleon's relation to "Europe" was ambivalent. There is his remark "*La vieille Europe m'ennuie*," the dream of a campaign in India, and his flirtation with the Orient. On the other hand, he is said to have stated (and at the height of his power): "*Lorsque nous nous battons entre Européens, nous faisons la guerre civile...*" Opportunism played a part: in 1805 and again in 1812 he considered the Tsar an Asiatic barbarian; in 1808 he saw him as a sublime confederate. As a "European" he ought not to have sold the vast territories of Louisiana for a



pittance to the United States, whom he falsely asserted in 1813 to be his allies against England. Seriously speaking one could be a "European" only in opposition to alien, rising, equal powers like America and Russia. The earliest, faint traces of this idea are to be found in Napoleon's day; they emerge more powerfully in the time of Napoleon III and the latter's own inventive mind.

To decide upon Napoleon's greatest European achievement is a matter of taste. It might be simplest to say: he himself, his figure, the energies which he contributed and which are recorded in the 22,000 items of the *Correspondence*. . . . To be sure, these are not very pleasurable reading. There is none of the pleasant sense of humour, the descriptions of landscapes, the lightning *aperçus* which we find in Bismarck's letters. Napoleon would never have been capable of drawing a portrait of himself in his so-called memoirs such as Metternich drew. They are cold, factual orders, together with bulletins and proclamations (and also speeches that read like proclamations). On every page they illustrate Madame de Staël's comment: "He was neither good nor bad, neither mild nor cruel like other people. . . . He doesn't hate, he doesn't love, for him there is nothing but himself." They remain a compendium of the arts of government and war. Lord Acton, a man of such a different character, an arch-moralist and a Liberal, says of them:

No intellectual exercise, for instance, can be more invigorating than to watch the working of the mind of Napoleon, the most entirely known as well as the ablest of historic men.

Is there a connection between the character of the principal figure and the level of the seething mass that surrounded him, his helpers, half-friends and enemies? They are part of it; they, not he alone, animate the great theatre of the world. The Talleyrands and Fouchés, the Chateaubriands and Madame de Staëls, the Pitts, Cannings and Castlereaghs, the Steins, Humboldts and Hardenbergs, the Stadions and Metternichs would have been active even without him. In the form in which we know them they are marked by him. For Metternich those eight years, 1806 to 1814, were more important than the ensuing thirty-four years of his rule; he felt melancholy when his great adversary was no longer there, and his report of the last interview in Dresden, in June 1813, reads like a scene from Schiller. Anyone who wrote about Napo-

leon wrote well. This is true not only of the famous memoirs—Caulaincourt, Pasquier, Marmont, etc.; it is also true of the minor, unknown ones. A Saxon officer named Odeleben, on the Emperor's staff in 1813, once recorded his observations. His book has been long forgotten, but it is classical prose. How did the Major come to write like this? There were almost no German political publicists before Napoleon: all of a sudden there they were, and of a calibre—Gentz and Görres—that was never attained again. They arose in reply to the challenge which he presented.

THE SAME MIGHT BE SAID of the writers who followed him, and of the historians. Stendhal, Balzac, Hugo, Manzoni, Heine—born geniuses, all of them, but as to the manner in which their genius expressed itself all of them affected by him. Even Eckermann's *Gespräche mit Goethe* is said to have been inspired by the *Mémorial de Ste-Hélène* (a conjecture advanced by Jean Prévost that has much to recommend it). Is there a more imposing work on the nature of foreign policy, all foreign policy, than Sorel's *L'Europe et la Révolution Française*? A more clear-sighted work on the rise to power than Vandal's *L'Avènement de Bonaparte*? How many biographies by more swiftly working authors have taken their line from Lacour-Gayet's *Talleyrand*? How many novels, plays, essays have been drawn from the ten volumes of Masson's *Napoléon et sa famille* or could still be drawn from them?

The Europe of historians, writers, and philosophers lived upon Napoleon as upon no other individual, each one seeing in him what he wished to see: following Taine and Stendhal, the belated Renaissance hero; following Heine, the friend of the People and of Nations, the "progressive humanist" as we should say today; to Marx he was a forerunner of "Bonapartism"; to Nietzsche the incarnation of his *Übermensch*; to Spengler the first Caesar of the "decline and fall." There are falsehoods in all these views, the crassest in Spengler's; there is also truth.



ONE CANNOT OVERLOOK an element of grand opera, not entirely free from operetta; a mixture of two styles, the late 18th-century Aristocratic and the Revolutionary. The marriages between the House of Bonaparte and the old dynasties are the most eloquent symbol of this; the coronations and festivities painted by David's corrupt master hand; the glittering beauty of the sisters from Corsica, the imperial princesses; the peacock finery of the gentlemen and ladies; the golden cradle of the King of Rome; the late-autumnal splendour of the decaying hierarchy before the grey of the burgher imposed itself: we see a reflection of this in the little castle of Arenenberg.

The creative achievements, however one may evaluate them, stand on one side. Everything else belonged in the realm of aesthetics: the power of attraction of the huge ego; the literature he inspired; the masters of political craft in his vicinity; the opera. There has been no lack of counter-arguments. Napoleon was no "benefactor of mankind" such as the discoverers of healing serums are; that is the last thing he was. Literature and opera do not compensate for the horrors of the battlefield. The pseudo-

democrat who immediately reintroduced slavery into the French West Indies where it had been abolished, who forbade the proletariat but not the *entrepreneurs* to organise, who (to say nothing of the sufferings of other nations) sacrificed 80,000 young Frenchmen to his manic ambition year after year, who began to pose as a lover of peace and humanity only when there was nothing else he could do . . . deserves no gratitude.

For the present, the writer of these lines cannot make up his mind to confront such a radical choice. Mankind certainly needs the healing serums. On the other hand, from the Great Kings, from the leaders of Athenian democracy down to Napoleon and somewhat beyond him, from Plutarch to Carlyle, mankind has also taken delight in the drama of history and its heroes. This may be now coming to an end. The change of outlook has the power to operate retrospectively, and in retrospect "history" has become a subject for sociological studies, for *statistique en mouvement*. Once this process has reached completion Napoleon will have vanished into the darkness—and with him many, many others.

## Folk Tale

Softly "Is it always there?"  
The child asks with frightened eyes.

Lovingly, his grand-mama,  
Stooping where the child lies,  
Soothes those frail, those fretful shoulders  
And "Of course it is" replies;  
Softly "Hush your chatter" murmurs,  
"Off to sleep now. Beddy-byes."

All night the dark rain flogs the sea,  
Its whips of water whirr;  
The land seems painted black with ink,  
But even inkier:  
And off the Cape of Genzan  
The half-bright waters stir.

And there, enormous, cradled in  
The sea's persistent hiss,  
The ghost-ship lolls at anchor,  
The *Indianapolis*,  
And, hanging lifeless from its mast,  
The skull-and-crossbones is.

*Ono Tōsaburō*

*Translated by Graeme Wilson*

## *"The Socialism of Fools"*

# The Left, the Jews & Israel

SHORTLY BEFORE he was assassinated, Martin Luther King, Jr., was in Boston on a fund-raising mission, and I had the good fortune to attend a dinner which was given for him in Cambridge. This was an experience which was at once fascinating and moving: one witnessed Dr. King in action in a way one never got to see in public. He wanted to find what the Negro students at Harvard and other parts of the Boston area were thinking about various issues, and he very subtly cross-examined them for well over an hour-and-a-half. He asked questions, and said very little himself. One of the young men present happened to make some remark against the Zionists. Dr. King snapped at him and said, "Don't talk like that! When people criticise Zionists, they mean Jews. You're talking anti-Semitism!"

In discussing the reactions to Israel of liberals, Leftists, New Leftists, old Leftists, academics and the like, one is talking about secular versions, in some ways, of various theological doctrines. The history of the relationship between the Left and the Jews indicates that the Jews have been intimately associated with the liberal-left side of the political spectrum. The Jews were an issue in the French Revolution, and have continued to concern political men ever since. For a century-and-a-half, the Left supported Jewish political and social rights against the existing establishments which tried to deny them. In Catholic feudal Europe, Jews had had few rights, and the universalistic egalitarian ideology stemming from the French

Revolution served to break down particularistic restrictions on all groups, and helped thereby also to secure the emancipation of the Jews.

But Leftist support for the liberation of the Jews, which helped gain them the right to take their part as citizens, was not an unmixed blessing. Historically the Left has assumed (sometimes explicitly, more often implicitly) that one of the payments the Jews would make to the Left for having liberated them would be to disappear. Liberal-left ideology of all varieties has assumed that within a free nation (and nationalism was historically a leftist revolutionary ideology in the 19th century), Jewish identity—like all other forms of parochial tribal loyalties—would be assimilated into the free, universalistic community. Jews would become members of the nation no different from anyone else: which meant that they would cease being Jews. The maintenance of Jewish particularistic customs—religious, ethnic, or any other—was not welcomed by the Left. The feeling that Jewish particularism is somehow reactionary, tribal, traditional, unmodern, has continued down to the present.

THERE IS ANOTHER ELEMENT in the ambivalent relationship between contemporary Left ideologies and movements and the Jews. The Socialist and Communist movements have opposed anti-Semitism and various restrictions on Jews participating as free citizens sharing with other parts of the Left the assumption that Judaism (*i.e.*, the Jews) would disappear in the forthcoming universalistic (socialistic) Utopia. Unlike liberalism, however, the socialist left has had another special problem, namely, an association of Jews with capitalism encouraged by the disproportionate number of businessmen, bankers, traders, and merchants among Jews.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>For an excellent historical discussion of anti-Semitism among socialists and the Left, with a useful bibliography, see George Lichtheim, "Socialism and the Jews," *Dissent* (July-August 1968), pp. 314-42.

From Bebel to Henry Ford

ANTI-SEMITISM, as August Bebel once pointed out, was "the Socialism of fools." In fact, it was perceived as a form of Socialism by many in the 19th century. Anti-Semitism (some Socialists thought or hoped) was a naïve, stupid beginning of a recognition that capitalism was evil. Therefore, anti-Semitism in itself was not morally bad, it was simply ignorant and incomplete. Some Socialists, including Marx himself, used the symbol of Jewish capitalism (of the Jews as merchants and "Shylocks") in their propaganda. Without going into the whole question of Marx's curious relationship with Judaism—it is certainly not a simple one—there can be little doubt Marx's belief system included some components which must be described as anti-Semitism.<sup>2</sup>

But the major aspect of Marxist 19th-century thinking on the subject—and this becomes relevant to some current developments in the American Negro community and to the reactions of Leftist intellectuals toward those developments—was to see lower-class anti-Semitism as a form of embryonic class-consciousness among workers. To talk about "oppressive Jewish businessmen" and "Jewish bankers" was considered a step in the right direction, it was part of the masses learning that all bankers and businessmen—all capitalists—were bad. In Czarist Russia, some young Jewish revolutionaries hailed the emergence of the anti-Semitic anti-Czarist *Narodnaya Volya* as evidence that the revolution was really under way. According to J. L. Talmon in an article on "Jews and Revolution" (published in the *Maariv* of 21 September 1969), three of the 28 members of the executive committee of this organisation which called in 1881 for a pogrom directed against the Tsar, the nobility, and the Jews, were themselves Jewish (as were many rank-and-file members).

This confused attitude toward anti-Semitism almost prevented the French Socialist party from taking a stand in the major Jewish *cause célèbre* of the Third Republic, the Dreyfus Case. While French radicals (liberals) like Zola and Clemenceau jumped to Dreyfus' defence, recog-

nising that a major principle was at stake in the persecution of a Jew, no matter who he was, a debate emerged among the Socialists. A number of them, particularly those on the revolutionary Left, argued that Socialists should not be concerned about Dreyfus since he was a professional soldier, a Captain in the Army, that whether Gentile militarists (or capitalists) persecuted Jewish militarists (or capitalists) was of no concern to revolutionary Socialists.

Jean Jaurès, the famous French revisionist socialist leader, saved the glory of the Socialist movement by insisting that whenever injustice was done, Socialists and radicals had to be in the forefront of the battle, that it made no difference whether injustice was done to a capitalist, a general, a Jew, or anybody else. He argued the case for socialist involvement in the defence of Dreyfus on a broad idealistic basis that had nothing to do with historical materialism or class struggle. Jaurès laid down the principle that the Left must always oppose religious and racial discrimination regardless of the social or economic status of the victim.<sup>3</sup>

In general, between the French Revolution and the end of World War II, the political history of continental Europe has suggested that most of the tendencies classified on the Right have been somewhat anti-Semitic, while those on the Left have been more defensive of Jewish rights. The traditional religious-linked Right groups regarded the Jews as outside of Christendom, and hence not properly qualified to be full citizens. Some more populist-oriented rightist movements used anti-Semitism as an anti-élite tactic to win mass support against the blandishments of the Socialists. There were, of course, some major exceptions to these generalisations, particularly among monarchical and aristocratic elements concerned with protecting "their" Jews against the vulgar prejudices of the masses or the materialistic middle-classes. The Socialists also tolerated some overt anti-Semites in their ranks, particularly in central Europe.

THIS HISTORIC LINK between position on matters of Jewish rights and the broader political spectrum helps to explain the presence of large numbers of Jews in the various Leftist movements, particularly of many wealthy Jews, who have supported radical Left causes. For much of European history, Jews had no alternative but to support a variety of Left tendencies. This was especially true within the Czarist Empire

<sup>2</sup> See Solomon Bloom, "Karl Marx and the Jews," *Jewish Social Studies* (January 1942), pp. 3-16; Edmund Silberner, "Was Marx an anti-Semite?" *Historia Judaica* (April 1949), pp. 1-52.

<sup>3</sup> Edmund Silberner, "French Socialism and the Jewish Question, 1865-1914," *Historia Judaica* (April 1957), pp. 13-14.



before World War I. This limitation on political alternatives was paralleled socially. The German political sociologist, Robert Michels, accounted for the Left propensities of many affluent Jews as a reaction to this phenomenon in his justly famed study of the structure of socialist parties, *Political Parties* (1911):

The origin of this predominant position [of the Jews in the European socialist movement] is to be found, as far at least as concerns Germany and the countries of Eastern Europe, in the peculiar position which the Jews have occupied and in many respects still occupy. The legal emancipation of the Jews has not been followed by their social and moral emancipation. In large sections of the German people a hatred of the Jews and the spirit of the Jew-baiter still prevail, and contempt for the Jew is a permanent thing. The Jew's chances in public life are adversely affected; he is practically excluded from the judicial profession, from a military career, and from official employment. . . .

Even when they are rich, the Jews constitute, at least in eastern Europe, a category of persons who are excluded from the social advantages which the prevailing political, economic, and intellectual system ensures for the corresponding portion of the Gentile population: Society in the narrower sense of the term is distrustful of them, and public opinion is unfavourable to them.<sup>4</sup>

The links of Jews to the Left in Europe affected the political behaviour of those who emigrated to America. Although the issue of Jewish emancipation, civil and social rights, did not concern American politics (and in any case, it was difficult to assign Left-Right labels to the two major U.S. parties in the second half of the 19th century which corresponded to the European divisions), the general ideological commitment of many Jews led them to support efforts to form leftist socialist and anarchist movements.

The small socialist-anarchist groups apart, Jews found it extremely difficult to respond in group self-interest or value terms to the American party system. Those attracted to the Abolitionist and Civil Rights causes were faced with the fact that the Republican party, both before and after the Civil War, had strong ties to anti-immigrant nativism, that most Know-Nothings

of the 1850s had become Republicans, including many top leaders of the party. The appeal to Jews by various agrarian elements and social reformers who sought to create anti-System "left-wing" third parties was limited, since many of these (from the Independent parties of the 1870s to the Populists of the 1890s) included among their spokesmen leaders and writers who emphasised the exploitative role of the Rothschilds and other international Jewish bankers. Although some serious students of Populism report little or no anti-Semitism in the local publications of the movement in the mid-west, there can be no doubt that the party welcomed into its ranks many who focused on the Jews, who produced an American version of "the socialism of fools."

THE NOMINATION of William Jennings Bryan for President in 1896 by both the Democratic and Populist parties in opposition to William McKinley, the pro-industry candidate of the Republicans, seemingly gave a Left-Right dimension to the two-party system, one which might have affected the political orientation of Left-disposed Jewish recent immigrants. Yet Edward Flower, who has studied that election, reports strong streaks of anti-Semitism in the Populist and Free Silver elements who provided a considerable part of Bryan's campaign organisation. An Associated Press dispatch from St. Louis at a time when both the Populist and Free Silver conventions were meeting is particularly noteworthy on this point:

One of the striking things about the Populist Convention, or rather the two conventions here and those attending them, is the extraordinary hatred of the Jewish race. It is not possible to go into any hotel in the city without hearing the most bitter denunciation of the Jews as a class and of the particular Jews who happen to have prospered in the world.<sup>5</sup>

Flower's examination of American Jewish publications of the day indicates considerable concern about the presence of anti-Semitism in the Bryan 1896 campaign generally, and among the Populists in particular. There were a number of references in these papers to anti-Semitic speeches by Populist and Democratic leaders. Mrs. Mary Lease, a prominent spokesman of Kansas Populism, toured the country speaking for Bryan in a manifestly anti-Semitic vein. After the election, Jewish Democratic politicians complained that Bryan had lost many Jewish votes because of the gibes of Populist orators.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Michels, *Political Parties* (ed. 1915), pp. 260-61.

<sup>5</sup> Edward Flower, "Anti-Semitism in the Free Silver and Populist Movements and the Election of 1896" (Columbia University History Department Master's Thesis, 1952), p. 27. The original quote is from the *New York Sun*, 23 July 1896, p. 2.

The peculiar appeal of anti-Semitic beliefs which emphasised the negative role of Jewish wealth and banking among "left-wing" agrarians continued through the 1920s. Thus Tom Watson, the most prominent leader of Southern Populism, who had opposed the coalition with the Democrats in 1896, and who tried to revive the party by running for President in 1904 and 1908, had become a flaming bigot by the second decade of the century. *Watson's Magazine* strongly attacked Negroes, Catholics, Jews, and Wall Street, and supported revolutionary left-wing movements abroad. He practically organised the lynching of Leo Frank, a wealthy Atlanta Jew, who had been accused of murdering "a working-class Gentile" girl; and he supported the Czarist government's charges that Mendel Beiliss had engaged in a ritual murder of a small Christian boy. The revived Ku Klux Klan was formed in 1915 by members of the Knights of Mary Phagen, an organisation formed under Tom Watson's sponsorship to make sure that Leo Frank died for Mary Phagen's murder.

Yet Watson opposed America's participation in World War I as subservience to "our Blood-gorged Capitalists." He strongly defended Eugene V. Debs, the Socialist leader, for his opposition to the war. Elected to the Senate in 1920, he attacked the oil companies and the U.S. Steel Corporation, praised the Soviet Union and demanded that the U.S. recognise it. Professor C. Vann Woodward's description of reactions to his death in 1922, illustrates the confusion that attends any effort to line up a consistent appeal of a rational democratic Left:

Eugene Debs, recently released from the penitentiary, wrote in a letter to Mrs. Watson: "He was a great man, a heroic soul who fought the power of evil his whole life long in the interest of the common people, and they loved and honored him..."

Most conspicuous among the floral tributes [at his funeral] was a cross of roses eight feet high, sent by the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>6</sup>

DURING THE 1920s the most prominent advocate of anti-Semitic sentiments in America was Henry Ford. His weekly newspaper, *The Dearborn Independent*, distributed by the hundreds

of thousands, denounced the Jews for everything evil under the sun, from Communism to short skirts, from bootlegging liquor to fomenting strikes, from control of Wall Street to control of the labour movement, from corrupting baseball to deliberate murder. But Ford and his paper also attacked non-Jewish international bankers, Wall Street, and the monopolies. And when dissatisfaction with conservative control of both major parties resulted in a movement in the early '20s to create a third Progressive party, Henry Ford was boomed for the nomination. A poll conducted by *Collier's Magazine*, in 1923, reported that over a third of those queried were for Ford. Senator Robert La Follette, who was himself to be the Presidential nominee of the Progressive and Socialist parties in the 1924 election, declared in the summer of 1923 that "Ford had great strength among the Progressives." A student of the Progressive campaign, Gordon Davidson, reports that

a group of Progressives, Farmer-Laborites, Independents, and Liberals from fifteen states met in Omaha on November 21 [1923] at the request of Roy M. Harrop, national temporary chairman of the Progressive Party. They passed a resolution endorsing Ford for President on a ticket to be known as the People's Progressive Party...<sup>7</sup>

Ford, fortunately, was unwilling to run. The willingness of many of the leaders of what was then the largest Left tendency in the United States to support Ford in spite of his vitriolic anti-Semitism illustrates again the extent to which segments of the Left have been willing to accept anti-Semitism as a foolish but potentially progressive version of anti-élitism or anti-capitalism.

IT IS HARD TO GENERALISE about the predominant political location of the mass of American Jews before 1928, although it appears true that East European Jews contributed heavily to the membership and support of the small Socialist and Communist parties. The identification of Jews with progressive and under-dog causes as well as their opposition to Prohibition probably led the vast majority of them to back Al Smith for President in 1928. And from the 1930s on, American Jews not only were linked disproportionately to the radical Left, they also in the large increasingly identified with Franklin Roosevelt and his New Deal.

The events of the years 1930-45 clearly served to intensify the ties in many countries between

<sup>6</sup> C. Vann Woodward, *Tom Watson: Agrarian Rebel* (1938; new ed., 1963), p. 486.

<sup>7</sup> Gordon W. Davidson, "Henry Ford: The Formation and Course of a Public Figure" (Columbia University History Department, Ph.D. Thesis), 1966, p. 286.

Jews and the parties of the Left, both moderate like the Democrats or Social Democrats, or extreme like the Communists. For portions of this period (especially 1936-39 and 1941-45), the Communists and the Soviet Union had a special appeal as seemingly the boldest and most prominent organisers of the anti-Nazi struggle.

This success of the Communists among American Jews occurred in spite of the fact that the most flagrant examples of "leftist" willingness to collaborate with anti-Semites who also espoused a version of "Socialism" were the relations between Communists and Nazis in 1931-32, and again in 1939-41. During the first period, the German Communist Party joined on occasion with the German National Socialist Workers Party (*N.S.D.A.P.*) in sponsoring strikes and a referendum which brought down the Social Democratic government in Prussia. This latter event ended the police action against the street terrorism of both extremist parties. During the second period, Molotov actually sent official fraternal greetings from the Soviet Communist Party to the German Nazis saluting their mutual interests. The French Communist Party applied to the Nazi occupation authorities for permission to publish the party organ *L'Humanité* (and to function in the occupied zone) on the grounds that the C.P.'s main concern was the defeat of the Allied imperialist forces. Although many quit the party in Western countries, these events (including cooperation of Stalin's Russia with Hitler's Germany in invading Poland in 1939) did not destroy the hard core of the party, nor did it prevent many Jews from remaining members or fellow-travellers in the U.S., Britain, Canada, and elsewhere.

Cooperation with the worst anti-Semites in history did not prove sufficient to alienate revolutionary leftists, Jews and Gentiles, from the Communist movement.

THE HEAVY DEPENDENCE of many liberal and leftist parties on Jews as leaders, financial backers, and as a mass base has concomitantly pressed such groups to react to Zionism more strongly than might have been anticipated given its limited size and scope. The moderate liberal-left in America and Europe, the Democrats, Liberals, and Social Democrats, have tended to be strong supporters of Zionism, accepting it as an appropriate response to the plight of Jews in "other" countries who suffered from persecution. Jewish moderates who adhered to such parties have tended on the whole to be less

alienated from a Jewish identification than those supporting the extreme left, and, therefore, more likely to be willing to identify openly with Jewish causes.

The Marxist Left also reacted to Zionism more strongly than its status as a movement would appear to have warranted. Its reaction tended to be one of total opposition. From its general ideological position, the Marxist Left considered Zionism a "bourgeois philosophy," an outmoded expression of nationalism which had to be opposed by socialist internationalists. The East European Left had opposed Zionism in part because in the Czarist Empire (in Poland, the Ukraine, Russia and Rumania, where there were very large, impoverished Jewish populations who were denied legal, political and social rights), Jews were an important source of mass support for the various left-wing oppositionist movements. For the East European Left, therefore, Zionism became a major rival political tendency competing for the support of the Jewish masses. The Jewish radicals, Socialists, Anarchists, and Bolsheviks, saw Zionism, quite naturally, as a political opponent, and strongly opposed it. Much of the opposition of the Soviet Communist Party to Zionism, after 1917, flowed from the earlier antagonism of the Jewish-Socialist *Bund* and other Jewish radical leftists to Zionism. Another source of the Jewish radicals' bitterness to Zionism derived from the fact that participation in the Socialist and Communist world meant, for many Jews, a way of escaping their Judaism, a way of *assimilating* into a universalistic non-Jewish world.

THE EXTENT TO WHICH Jewish radicals, left-wing Socialists and Communists, turn out to be much more anti-Zionist than the non-Jewish radicals has been striking, and it is worthy of special comment. The non-Jewish radicals could look upon Zionism as simply another movement, another opposition tendency, but one among the many movements to which they were opposed. The Jewish radicals, both European and American, had to resist Zionism much more strongly since many of them felt both tied to it in some ways, and also experienced the need to disassociate themselves from anything which smacked of their hated inferiority status as Jews. They argued in classic Left terms that the solution to anti-Semitism lay in Jewish assimilation in a socialist society, where presumably all forms of nationalistic particularism would disappear.

*The State of Israel*

WHATEVER DIVISIONS EXISTED about alternatives to European anti-Semitism faded during World War II, under the impact of the holocaust. Six million Jews were murdered. By 1948 and the creation of the State of Israel, there was, for a very short, very unique period, almost complete unanimity about the value of creating a Jewish state. The justifications which produced this unanimity varied greatly, but clearly the holocaust settled the argument advanced by many Socialists, that Jews should not emigrate to Palestine, that they should "remain and fight to create Socialism at home." No one could really argue any longer that Jews should stay on in lands in which almost all of their brethren had been decimated.

The Soviet Union found it in its interest to support the creation of the State of Israel, which meant that the international Communist movement also gave enthusiastic support to the emergence of the State. This period, of course, lasted for only a moment as far as world history is concerned; shortly thereafter, Stalin's paranoia, focusing on the Jews as "foreign agents," gave birth to a new wave of Soviet anti-Semitism, in the Doctor's Plot in the U.S.S.R., in the various treason trials in Rumania and Czechoslovakia, and in the trials of economic speculators, as well as in the repression of various Jewish rights in the Soviet Union. It has been suggested that the creation of Israel, itself, contributed to the revival of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union—because of the clear evidence that the Jews of the Soviet Union (and other Eastern European countries) were as positively and enthusiastically impressed and gratified by the creation of the State of Israel as Jews in the West or anywhere else. Russian Jews exhibited their strong support for Israel publicly in many ways. When Golda Meir went to Moscow as the first Israeli ambassador, she was greeted by tens of thousands of Moscow Jews. There were scores of comparable incidents which showed the passion of Russian Jews for Israel. Such behaviour was viewed as evidence of disloyalty by Stalin, for it suggested

that the Jews did not have a total commitment to the Soviet Union. Some Russian experts have pointed to Stalin's long-time personal history of anti-Semitic sentiments and behaviour. But whatever the source of Stalin's revival of anti-Semitism, the fact is that the Soviet Union quickly turned from a supporter to an enemy of Israel, a role which it has maintained under all of Stalin's successors. Governmental support for anti-Semitism within the Soviet Union and the rest of Eastern Europe had had its ups-and-downs, its ebbs-and-flows, but it has never been totally repudiated, and has continued to exist.<sup>8</sup>

THE PERSISTENT RUSSIAN OPPOSITION to Israel, of course, has affected a part of the Left, that still considerable section which sympathises with the Soviet Union. China and its followers in the Communist world have been even more vitriolically anti-Israeli, although Israel was one of the first countries to recognise Communist China. Technically Israel still recognises it, although Communist China has never "recognised" Israel. (In the United States, those organisations which by their own description are pro-Maoist Communists include both wings of SDS, the "right-wing" Revolutionary Youth Movement and the "left-wing" Worker-Student Alliance, the Progressive Labor Party, and the Black Panther Party. Most recently, however, the latter has shifted somewhat, forming an alliance with the original pro-Russian Communist Party.) The emergence of the anti-imperialist Third World bloc, a non-aligned group of countries mainly in Asia and Africa, also has affected the relations of the Left to Israel, since much of the Arab world joined with various other new nations, to form this non-aligned group.

The Arabs successfully demanded that Israel be excluded from this camp, even though Israel made some initial gestures to establish its role as "an Asian state" that was part of the Afro-Asian world. The Arabs, however, had a lot more votes in the U.N., more political power, and that part of the Afro-Asian world which though not directly a part of the Communist world had strong ideological links to it (e.g., Indonesia, Guinée, Mali, and Tanzania) pressed for the rejection of Israel. Israel has never been able to become part of the Afro-Asian world, although it has succeeded in establishing strong links with many countries in black Africa. The leaders of the Afro-Asian group of non-aligned countries have defined themselves as strongly in opposition

<sup>8</sup> See William Korey, "The Legal Position of the Jewish Community of the Soviet Union," in Erich Goldhagen, ed., *Ethnic Minorities in the Soviet Union* (Praeger, 1968), pp. 316-50; Moshe Decter, "Soviet Jewry: A Current Survey," *Congress* (5 December 1966), pp. 6-40; Zygmunt Bauman, "The End of Polish Jewry—a Sociological Review," *Bulletin on Soviet and East European Jewish Affairs* (January 1969), pp. 3-8.

to the Western imperialist countries, among whom they place Israel. The Arabs have continued, with greater or lesser success (depending on the part of the world they address), to argue that their conflict with Israel is essentially a continuation of the anti-colonial struggle with imperialist powers, that Israel is essentially a satellite of the United States—of the European-American World—thrust into the Afro-Asian border areas, and therefore, that it has to be eliminated.

THIS IMAGE OF ISRAEL inevitably has had a great deal of influence. Its acceptance is, of course, not just a propaganda success, but reflects a degree of validity. Clearly in the context of having been rejected by the Soviet Union and China, of not being welcomed by the Afro-Asian alliance-countries, and of being strongly dependent on financial support from American Jewry and political support from Washington, Israel has had no alternative but to maintain strong links with the United States and Western Europe. Realistically, whatever the sources of its original international position, Israel had to become part of "the American alliance"—of the grouping of states which emerged around the United States.

In spite of the opposition of China, the Soviet Union, and many Afro-Asian states to Israel, much of the Left retained a strong sense of identification with Israel until the Six-Day War. The existence of a large viable cooperative movement and economy in the form of the Histruth and the *kibbutzim*... the fact that all Israeli governments have been dominated by socialist parties—the strong enthusiasms for Israel and its institutions voiced by the highly influential group of Left-oriented Jewish intellectuals, and the strong sense of guilt felt by many for their ineffective response to the Nazi holocaust... all served to maintain Israel's credit within the liberal-left movement (including almost all socialist parties in developed countries, and many communist ones as well).

The Six-Day War, however, had a decisive effect in changing the reaction of the Left to Israel because (and I think this is also true with respect to much of the Christian world) Israel by its quick victory ceased being an underdog nation. Leftist values, as well as religious sentiments (particularly Christian ones), tend to make common cause with underdogs against the more powerful. Many seem to believe that

anybody who looks underprivileged and poor must be right, and should receive moral support. Jews and Israel were long regarded as the underdog, as victims... an image reinforced by their treatment by the Germans in the last war, by the Communist world's massive opposition to Israel, by its being surrounded by a hundred million Arabs. But from this perspective, the Israeli victory in June of 1967 was much too good, much too quick, to maintain sympathies and solidarities. The Arabs became the underdog for many on the Left as well as throughout Christendom. Israel is now held to be a strong and rich nation, while the Arabs are weak, underdeveloped, poor. Anybody defined as an underdog is good, anybody seen as powerful is bad. This sentiment has affected and continues to affect the images of Israel and the Arab world. The only way Israel can change it is to lose.

### *The New Left*

THE MOST IMPORTANT political event affecting Israel in Western politics in recent years has been the rise of the New Left. Without going into the reasons for its emergence, there is no question that the New Left movement has been significant. Though it arose mainly as a campus phenomenon, it has also affected the older world of Left intellectuals. New Left ideology originally was new or different from that of the Old Left in the sense that it opposed *all* powers, by announcing its hostility to "all Establishments" including some of the Communist world, particularly that of the Russians, and to some extent (it varies from country to country) that of the Chinese as well. Unlike earlier Western student groups, the movement was unaffiliated to the major adult left-wing parties. Basically it lacked a clear-cut, positive programme as to what it wanted, how to achieve power, how to change society "fundamentally." Increasingly, however, its need to find a defensible ideological position led it into an association with dissident forms of communism, mainly Maoist. At the 1969 convention of SDS, the most important New Left group in the United States, all major factional tendencies proclaimed themselves as Marxist-Leninist pro-Maoist communists. They even used quotes from Stalin (who is still viewed positively by the Maoists) against each other in debate. The weekly New Left newspaper, *The Guardian*, concluded in its editorial on the convention:

The new left as it has been known during this decade disappeared during the Chicago SDS convention. It is being replaced by Marxism-Leninism. (15 July 1969, p. 12).

The New Left, particularly since June 1967, has identified Israel with the American Establishment. This view has been affected by the relationship of Jews and Negroes in the United States, the growth of Black Nationalism, and the links of certain radical Negro groups with the Arab world. This Negro view of the Arab-Israeli conflict is related to the growing tension between a section of the black militant leadership and some Jews. The conflict is largely a result of American events, and there is not very much Israel can do about it. Even though various Black leaders in this country (*viz.*, Stokely Carmichael and others) have become overtly pro-Arab, I do not think this derives from a serious view of the Arabs as "oppressed peoples," or even a conception of *Black* (Arabs) *v.* *White* (Jews), which sometimes seems to be implied in black nationalist literature.

THE SPLIT BETWEEN the Jew and the Negroes, which has affected attitudes towards Israel, stems much more from the American situation than the Middle East conflict. Ironically enough, part of the tension stems from the fact that Jews have been so involved in Civil Rights. The integrationist movement was largely an alliance between Negroes and Jews (who, to a considerable extent, actually dominated it). Many of the inter-racial Civil Rights organisations have been led and financed by whites, and the majority of their white members have been Jews. Insofar as a Negro effort emerged to break loose from involvement with whites, from domination of the civil rights struggle by white liberals, this meant concretely a break with Jews, for they were the whites who were active in these move-

<sup>9</sup> It is particularly ironic that much of black Africa has a strong antipathy to the Arab world. The Arabs are the historic slavers of Africa; a small African slave trade which arranges the shipment of blacks to portions of Arabia to serve white masters still exists. In addition, there are two "hot wars" between Arabs and African blacks in the Sudan and the Chad. In the Sudan, the dominant Arabs in the north are fighting black Christian and animist rebels who seek equal political rights. In the Chad, the formerly dominant and more advantaged Arabs of the north are the rebels seeking to overthrow the government of the animist and Christian Africans who are the majority of the country. I have seen no evidence that any American black organisation has devoted the slightest attention to the civil wars in the Sudan and the Chad.

ments. The Black Nationalist leadership had to push whites (Jews) "out of the way," and to stop white (Jewish) "interference" in order to get whites (Jews) "off their backs."

Perhaps more important than the struggle within the Civil Rights Movement has been the conflict inherent in the historical fact that most Negro ghettos in the North were formerly Jewish ghettos. Negroes moved into Jewish areas such as Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Roxbury, Watts, as well as Jewish districts in Washington, Chicago, Philadelphia and many other cities. The reasons for this pattern of ethnic succession attest to positive aspects in Jewish racial attitudes—they were less resistant to Negroes moving into their neighbourhoods, they reacted much less violently, than other white communities. This process meant, however, that though Jews eventually moved out as residents, some of them remained as landlords and store-owners. Hence many Negroes came to see Jews not as neighbours, but in the role of economic oppressors.

Reinforcing these consequences of ecological succession has been the effects of the fact that during the 1930s, large numbers of able Jews found that the only place they could secure employment was in government service, as teachers, social workers, or other professionals. Thirty years later, many of these same Jews (now in their 50s and 60s) are at the summits of the civil service hierarchy as school principals, division heads, etc. And as Negroes follow the Jews into the Civil Service, they find that the directors of units operating in Negro areas are often Jews. The request that "blacks be given top jobs" in such organisations often has become a demand that Jews be removed from positions which they obtained through merit and seniority.

THESE ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS which have helped produce the tension between Negroes and Jews have had their obvious effect on the white New Left (which is itself disproportionately Jewish). It is told by the Black Nationalists: "We don't want whites, but we particularly don't want Jews, and we are expressing antagonism to Jews in the form of opposition to Israel." They attack Israel and Zionism as an expedient way of voicing their anti-Semitism. In essence, therefore, the attack on Israel on the part of some sections of the Negro community reflects tensions in the local American scene, not in the Middle East.<sup>9</sup>

I should stress, however, that the large majority of the Negro community, even the majority of those active in various black militant organisations, are *not* anti-Semitic or anti-Israel. The data available from various public opinion polls show that the level of anti-Semitic feeling in the Negro community is no greater than it is in the white community, that it remains relatively low in both. The existence of "black anti-Semitism" is being highlighted because of the expression of anti-Semitic sentiments by the most militant and radical leaders and organisations; and it is they who get the most publicity from the white-controlled mass-media. These sentiments should not be ignored, however, since they are growing among younger black spokesmen, who are unaware of the close ties between Jews and Negroes in the past. They also have an impact far exceeding their importance within Negro public opinion among those sections of the white population, whose guilt feelings about being white, or desire to use the Negro to build a mass radical movement, lead them to follow the political path of the most militant black leaders. Thus, the anti-Semitism, "the socialism of fools," occasionally voiced by groups such as the Black Panthers, SNCC (now the Student National Coordinating

Committee) and other black militant ones have had a considerable impact on their white fellow-travellers inside SDS and other sections of the Left.<sup>10</sup> The earlier Marxist attacks on anti-Jewish appeals have been forgotten, and the contemporary New Left has been condemned to repeat the foolishness.

The task of analysing the impact of the New Left on Israel's position is further complicated by the fact that Jews play a very great role in the student-based New Left, considerably disproportionate to the number of Jewish students on campus. This is not only true of students; it is also characteristic of the older Left community as well. Many of these Jewish Leftists exhibit familiar forms of Jewish self-hatred, of so-called "Jewish anti-Semitism," of the sort which were widespread within the Left before the Nazi holocaust and the creation of the State of Israel. Self-hatred is becoming a major problem for the American Jewish community. There is a real need for some serious analysis of the sources of Jewish anti-Semitism. It is not an inconsiderable phenomenon, and one of the forms it takes among Jewish youth is the denunciation of their parents as "hypocrites" (a criticism which attests to the fact that their values are not terribly different from those of their families, otherwise why accuse them of hypocrisy?).

<sup>10</sup> For example, *Black Panther*, the weekly organ of the *Black Panther* party, published an article by Field Marshall, D.C., "Zionism (Kosher Nationalism) + Imperialism = Fascism" in its issue of 30 August 1969, in which Zionism is described several times as "Kosher nationalism" and as a variety of "fascism." The article refers to the "fascist Zionist pigs." This is not a new development. The June 1967 issue of *Black Power*, published by the Black Panther Party of Northern California, included a poem "Jew-Land," which contains these lines:

*Jew-Land, On a summer afternoon  
Really, Couldn't kill the Jews too soon  
Now dig. The Jews have stolen our bread  
Their filthy women tricked our men into bed  
So I won't rest until the Jews are dead...  
In Jew-Land, Don't be a Tom on Israel's side  
Really, Cause that's where Christ was crucified.*

The SNCC Newsletter of June-July 1967 contained a two-page centre spread on "The Palestine Problem" which among other statements asked its readers whether they knew "THAT the famous European Jews, the Rothschilds, who have long controlled the wealth of many European nations, were involved in the original conspiracy with the British to create the 'State of Israel' and are still among Israel's chief supporters? THAT THE ROTHSCHILDS ALSO CONTROL MUCH OF AFRICA'S MINERAL WEALTH?" (emphasis in original).

VARIOUS STUDIES of American student militants indicate that the Left activists tend to come from liberal-Left families, disproportionately Jewish. Basically there is continuity in family ideology, rather than a break. To see the New Leftist students (in Kenneth Kenniston's phrase) as "Red Diaper Babies" is not an exaggerated image. Many of them come from families which around the breakfast table, day after day, in Scarsdale, Newton, Great Neck, and Beverly Hills have discussed what an awful, corrupt, immoral, undemocratic, racist society the United States is. Many Jewish parents live in the lily-white suburbs, go to Miami Beach in the winter, belong to expensive country clubs, arrange *Bar Mitzvahs* costing thousands of dollars—all the while espousing a left-liberal ideology. This is their hypocrisy, and it is indeed the contradiction which their children are rebelling against. Many Jewish parents, unlike Gentile parents of equivalent high economic class background, live a schizophrenic existence. They sustain a high degree of tension between their ideology and their life style.



SOME YEARS AGO, Nathan Glazer, Herbert Hyman, and I did a study of Jewish behaviour and attitudes, through secondary analyses of various public opinion studies that had been gathered in New York and other places. We isolated large samples of Jews and discovered, among other things, that at the same middle-class income-level, 40% to 60% of the Jews had part-time servants, as against 0-5% of the Protestants. People outside the South who had a full-time servant were preponderantly Jewish.<sup>11</sup> Relatively few Christians had one. We found a pattern, a style of social life, of relative asceticism among middle and middle-upper-class Protestants which did not exist among Jews on an equivalent income level. But, though affluent Jews lived well, spent considerable sums on housing, vacations, servants, costly cars, they also as a group continued to maintain a relatively liberal-left view of the world. This "left-wing" outlook and "right-wing" style has created grievous tension between parents and children.

Young Jews take seriously the leftist ideologies they imbibed at home, particularly when they move to the liberal campus environment. They see American Jewish life as essentially immoral and hypocritical, and not a few of them extend this view to Israel's relations with Arabs. Israel, in effect, seems to be behaving like their parents. Israel itself does not really interest them. They are essentially reacting to American Jewish conditions and to the American way of life. But the very significance and the quantitative importance of the Jews within the American Left—and even within parts of the European Left—mean that Jews are beginning to take the lead in an attack on Israel and on Jewish customs. This fact serves to alleviate any sense of guilt or tension about anti-Semitism which non-Jewish Leftists might have.

### The Breaking Point

WHAT IS BEING DONE about this? One thing which presumably might have some positive effect on the Left's attitude toward Israel is a revival of the image of Israel as a centre of social experimentation. The *kibbutz* still remains the only viable example of a decentralised, anarchist-socialist society. Those who want to see "participatory democracy" in

action, the workers actually running their institutions, can point to nothing as successful as the *kibbutz*. Here it must be acknowledged that Israel and its public relations may be more at fault than the New Left youth for their ignorance on these matters. In the past decade, Israel has done little to establish itself as an example of social reform, of institutional experimentation. In its efforts to secure investments and contributions from wealthy Americans, it has placed more emphasis on creating an image of Israel as a successful, free-enterprise "bootstrap" operation, a sort of small mini-scale Japan. But in selling itself thus to the business community, it may well have contributed to weakening a major portion of its political base.

Yet in this connection it may be useful to examine the contents of a recent book, *Obsolete Communism*, by Daniel and Gabriel Cohn-Bendit. "Danny the Red" was one of the major leaders of the French student revolt of May 1968, and the Cohn-Bendit brothers emerge in this book as anarchists. As a positive example of anarchism in action, they point to the Makhno movement in Russia of 1918 to 1921, which dominated a large area of the Ukraine. (The Cohn-Bendits do not mention that Nestor Makhno was an anti-Semite. I do not blame them for this, since they probably do not know it.) Yet though they discuss politics in many countries they do not say a word about Israel or the *kibbutzim*. Evidently they are not "relevant" to the proposals for new anarchist forms of society. This, surely, is not a result of ignorance, since some years ago Danny Cohn-Bendit spent several months in Israel, mainly on a *kibbutz*, and even considered settling there. He tries to make a case for anarchist institutions, but does not even mention the one country where concrete examples of such institutions exist. He also fails to mention the fact that there were *Al Fatah* Arab terrorist booths in the Sorbonne during the 1968 student sit-ins, and that the New Left anarchist as well as the Marxist Leninist groups supported them. Danny Cohn-Bendit, who admires the radical anti-Semite Makhno and knows not Israel, is not an atypical Jewish boy. We will be seeing many more like him.

OLDER LEFT-WING CRITICS of Israel such as I. F. Stone and Professor Noam Chomsky also can not be accused of ignorance concerning the Israeli socialist movement or its radical institutions. Both men who now write harshly about

<sup>11</sup> Since these servants are almost invariably Negro, this fact reinforces the image in the black community of the Jew as an economic exploiter.



Israel have visited the country on a number of occasions, and are personally well acquainted with the Israeli Left, with the Histadruth and the *kibbutzim*. Chomsky, in fact, was a long time member of "Hashomair Hatzair," the left-wing Zionist youth movement, which prided itself on its Marxism-Leninism, and its loyalty to Communist ideals. Like Daniel Cohn-Bendit, he considered settling in Israel, and also appears to have strong anti-communist anarchist sympathies. But Stone, Chomsky, and Cohn-Bendit are today committed supporters of the international revolutionary left, a commitment which currently involves defining the *Al Fatah* terrorists as "left-wing guerrillas," and Israel as "a collaborator with imperialism," if not worse. One doubts whether even the most sophisticated presentation of Israel's case could ever regain their support.

In fairness, I should note that the various wings of the far Left, while all anti-Israel, are not united in their estimate of *Al Fatah*, or the positive worth of Arab terrorism. The Russians and their followers in the Communist movement exhibit some opposition to terroristic and guerrilla tactics by Arab groups. In the March 1969 issue of *Dokumentation der Zeit*, a magazine published by the East German Institute for Contemporary History, the *Al Fatah* was described as a group whose student founders were inspired by "the reactionary terrorists of the Moslem Brethren," and who now secure most of their funds and supplies from "the Arab oil states of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia." The article argues:

The slogans and general tendency of *Al Fatah* represent the most extreme elements of the resistance movement. By strictly prohibiting any political and ideological activity of its members, *Al Fatah* is preventing the necessary process of ideological clarification among the resistance organisations and trying to pin the movement down to a rigid extremist line, which in the last resort, amounts to nothing but a reinforcement of imperialism through a policy of Left adventures.

The considerable support which the intellectual Left once gave to Israel is gone, and it is not

<sup>12</sup> Ironically, the reverse process appears to have occurred in the Communist countries of Eastern Europe. There, Israel has become a symbol among protesting students and intellectuals of a free small power which has stood up to powerful bullies (backed by the Soviet Union). To support Israel in Poland, Russia, etc., is a way of voicing opposition to the anti-Semitic policies of their Communist governments.

likely to be revived, certainly not on the same basis.<sup>12</sup> Israel must expect to be criticised by the extreme Left for the foreseeable future. Since Left intellectuals have been, and continue to be important in forming public opinion, this is obviously a major loss to Israel's public position. It is also important to recognise that short of another war, the almost unanimous support that Israel has received from the Jewish community will not continue. The division (partly age-linked and partly ideological) between younger and older Jews, and between Left-groups and Jewish-identified groups, will continue to affect attitudes to Israel. The Jewish community in America, particularly, is likely to become much more polarised politically than it has been for a long time. We are going to see an upsurge of large numbers of overtly conservative Jews. A kind of backlash is occurring among Jews who remain more identified with Israel and Zionism—or with the Synagogue—as a reaction to the attacks on Jews and Israel coming from the Left and the Black Nationalists.

BUT IF ISRAEL HAS LOST support on the Left, it has gained among groups not previously known for their sympathy for Jewish causes. Those aspects of Israel's foreign and military policies which alienate left-wing sympathy attract rightist support. Many non-Jewish conservatives see in Israel's successful military resistance to the Arab world, and its defiance of United Nations resolutions, an example of the way in which a nation which has self-pride—and which is not "corrupted by the virus of internationalism and pacifism"—can defend its national self-interests. Some see in the Israeli defeat of the Arabs, the one example of an American ally which has decisively defeated Communist allies in battle. Thus, Israel and its supporters find themselves with friends on the Right, and enemies on the Left.

Although many arch conservatives (e.g., Barry Goldwater and some of the contributors to William Buckley's magazine, *The National Review*) are now strongly pro-Israel, the extremist Right, like the extremist Left, remains very hostile, an attitude linked to their continued anti-Semitism. Thus, *The Thunderbolt*, the organ of the racist National States Rights Party, stated in April that it supports "a strong Arab stand against the brutal aggression of Israel." Gerald L. K. Smith's *Cross and the Flag* repeatedly condemns Israel for crimes against the Arabs. The Italian neo-Fascists strongly back

the *Al Fatah* and (like the New Left) reprint much of its propaganda. The fascist magazine, *La Nation Européenne*, also supports *Al Fatah* and advertises its publications. The German National Democrats, in their paper, *Deutsche National Zeitung*, take a similar pro-Arab terrorist line. I do not think it would be unfair to say that the revolutionary fascist Right and the revolutionary communist Left have similar positions with respect to Middle East conflict and the role of *Al Fatah*. But it should be stressed that the opposition of the Left extremists is by far more powerful than that of the fascists, who have little influence.

The pattern of increased support for Israel among the democratic conservative or rightist groups has been paralleled on the American home front with respect to domestic issues.

<sup>13</sup> In the 1966 referendum on the retention of a civilian police review board in New York City, Jews divided in this way: 40 per cent for keeping the board, 55 per cent for abolishing it. In the 1965 mayoralty election the Tammany candidate Beame secured 56 per cent of the Jewish vote as compared to 41 per cent for the Republican-Liberal Lindsay. In 1969, Sam Yorty running against a moderate Negro candidate, Tom Bradley, for Mayor of Los Angeles, did much better than anticipated in Jewish districts in the final election, securing between 40-45 per cent of the vote. And in the New York City Democratic mayoralty primary in June 1969, the Jewish Democratic vote split into three parts. Slightly less than a third went to the more conservative "law and order" candidate, Mario Proccacino; another third backed the centrist candidate, former mayor Robert Wagner; and somewhat more than a third divided among the three more "liberal" candidates, Badillo, Sheuer, and Norman Mailer. In the November elections, according to an NBC computer precinct analysis, John Lindsay, the victorious Liberal Party nominee who defeated the more conservative Democratic and Republican candidates, secured 42% of the Jewish vote (exactly the percentage he received among the electorate as a whole). The more affluent, younger and irreligious Jews tended to vote for Lindsay, while the less privileged, older, and more religious ones opted for his more conservative rivals.

Those Jews who are concerned with the adverse consequences of Negro militancy on areas of Jewish concern (e.g., the preservation of the merit system in civil service employment and standards of admission to university, the rights of Jewish businessmen in the ghetto) find more support from conservatives than from liberals. Conservatives eager to gain Jewish support have made overtures to the Jewish groups. Recent local elections indicate that the vaunted "near unanimous" commitment of Jews to liberal and Negro causes is breaking down.<sup>14</sup>

THE SEPARATION of the Jewish population into the same constituent parts that divide the American electorate as a whole, may be testimony to the end of the almost two-century period in which the politics of Jewry has been a sub-theme to the politics of the Revolution. The identification of Jewish causes with those of the Left reached an all-time high point between 1930 and 1950, periods dominated internationally by the anti-Nazi struggle and the fight to create the state of Israel. Within the United States, this link was reinforced by the strong involvement of Jews with the Civil Rights cause which lasted through most of the 1960s.

The rise of the New Left, the shift in the international position of Israel, and the tensions between sections of the Jewish and Negro communities, have all contributed to breaking the relations between the Left and Jewry. Jews will, of course, continue to contribute in heavily disproportionate numbers to the activist Left, particularly to that section which derives its main strength from the university and intellectual worlds. But they will also increasingly sustain moderate liberal and conservative politics. Israel will probably find its greatest supporters among American Jews and non-Jews in the ranks of such centre groupings, and this may well make life difficult for those who seek to remain both socialist and Zionist.

John Mander

## Must We Love the Germans?

"THERE IS a nimiety—a too-muchness—in all Germans. It is the national fault." Coleridge should have known, for it was among his distinctions that he was the first English man of letters to take the Germans seriously. Yet even Coleridge, evidently, could not take the Germans entirely seriously. When Coleridge and Wordsworth, as young men, visited the aged Klopstock—perhaps the first meeting between high representatives of the British and German intelligentsia—the upshot was sadly symbolic. Klopstock, the adulator of Milton, could no more make himself understood than the young admirers of *Der Messias*. Neither could speak each other's language. It was a conversation of the deaf. And so—despite Coleridge and Carlyle, despite Matthew Arnold and T. H. Green—the Anglo-German relationship has largely remained. The hatred of all things German that swept from office Lord Haldane and Prince Louis Battenberg in 1914, and has vitiated so many attempts at Anglo-German understanding since that time, was not based (as in France) on an intimate knowledge, if one-sided, of the German character, but on the most profound ignorance. One of the more unfortunate side-effects of that hatred has been to deepen the ignorance still further.

Historically, then, a state of ignorance would appear to be the rule rather than the exception in the field of Anglo-German relations. Nor is this really surprising. Germany and Britain are at bottom parallel, even divergent cultures, seen in a European historical perspective. The culture of Germany is rooted, as is our own, in Christian and pagan antiquity. But the channels of mediation are seldom the same. If, in our case, the channel runs *via* classical and medieval France, through Italy, to the world of antiquity, for the Germans it runs much the same course. But the channel does not run for us *via* Berlin,

Weimar, or Heidelberg; nor, for the Germans, does it in general take the circuitous route Paris-London-Berlin. In general—for there are certain obvious exceptions. The Germans were glad, during their cultural renaissance at the close of the 18th century, to welcome Shakespeare into their pantheon. Conversely, we are indebted to Germany for Luther's Reformation and for that most distinctive German gift to the common European culture: *Deutsche Musik*. But what, in the broader sense of the word culture, do we owe the Germans, or the Germans ourselves? Germans wear English cloth and drink Scotch whisky; to act the Britisher is "gentleman-like," and has been so since the 18th century. But the scale is heavily weighted on the German side. When we are asked what we owe to the Germans we are reduced, somewhat pathetically, to that shrivelled Nordic giant, Prince Albert's Christmas tree. It is not much, certainly, compared with what we both owe to those cultures through which the wisdom of antiquity has been transmitted to us. *Kennst du das Land...?* Indeed we do. It is the same *Drang nach dem Süden* that impels us both.

THE CENTURY BETWEEN Coleridge, Scott, De Quincey, and Crabb Robinson, and the savage anti-Germanism of 1914, then, stands out in strong relief. Earlier, at least an attempt was made to understand, and if possible to mediate, the values of a culture that had proved itself, by Coleridge's time, the equal of any in Europe. Yet how much was truly understood; and how well has the work of mediation lasted? In Matthew Arnold's *Friendship's Garland* (1868–1871), a certain Herr Arminius attempts "to introduce *Geist* into England." The attempt takes place in the course of a train journey from Dover to London between "a typical Englishman" and "a typical German."

"You are a strong Liberal," says the Englishman, "you are drawn towards England because of her Liberalism and away from the French Emperor because of his despotism."

"Liberalism and Despotism!" cries Herr Arminius, "Let us go beyond these forms and words! What unites and separates people now is *Geist*."

What *Geist* meant to Arnold we know well enough from *Culture and Anarchy*: it is the antithesis of that middle-class, philistine<sup>1</sup> materialism which he saw overtaking the England of his day. Certainly, *Geist* is not easily translatable: neither mind, spirit, nor intellect quite expresses its meaning. Yet it is, to Arnold, that faculty of man which enables him to look beyond external appearances, and to enter the realm of an "unclouded clearness of mind." It is their devotion to *Geist*, to the Hellenic ideal, that Arnold praises in the Germans, and the lack of which he deplores in the English. Intriguingly, it is the same antithesis that Thomas Mann was to set up in his post-1914 patriotic effusion, *Confessions of an Unpolitical Man*, between the spiritual "*Kultur*" of the Germans and the materialistic "*Zivilisation*" of the Western powers—and particularly the Anglo-Saxons. Arnold's essays bear a date-line: 1871. What may have been true of pre-1871 Germany was no longer true of the Germany of Bismarck—as Thomas Mann, to his honour, was quick to realise.

EVIDENTLY, someone had blundered. But was it the British Germanophiles who, in their infatuation with *Geist*, overlooked the darker aspects of the German soul? Or was it the Germans, eager newcomers to the world of *Kultur*, who had been leading their foreign admirers by the nose? Or is there a third possibility—that the Germans *had* in fact changed their nature between 1871 and 1914? Each explanation has an element of truth. The German self-image, anachronistically cultivated by Thomas Mann, did correspond in large part to the picture well-wishing foreigners were ready to accept. One might christen this the Tacitus Complex. What was Matthew Arnold doing but using the supposed virtues of the Teutons

as a rod for the backs of his own nation, as Tacitus had done for Imperial Rome?

Yet the deception was not deliberate, or at least not calculated. Most educated Germans of the post-Goethe era honestly believed in 1914, and in many cases till 1945, that Germany had at last come into her own, and that her world-historical mission was to convert the rest of mankind to the ideals of Goethe's and Schiller's Weimar. Nor, in the years before 1871, was the German claim without foundation. Germany had produced a dramatic and poetic literature comparable with that of her western and southern neighbours. In science, linguistics, and historiography she had taken the lead. In music, philosophy and theology Germany was the undisputed *praeceptor Europae*. Even in architecture (though this was little regarded at the time) she had produced, in the previous century, the triumphant Baroque and Rococo churches of south Germany. Lord Palmerston might scoff at the Germans as a nation of "damned professors." But the verdict of the academic world was, as H. A. L. Fisher wrote in his *History of Europe* (1935), unanimous:

While Oxford and Cambridge, once liberated [in 1871] from the thralldom of religious tests, reverberated with the echoes of Teutonic learning, the more eminent professors of Berlin or Göttingen could count on a band of young English admirers, who, returning to their more civilised but less erudite compatriots, preached the majesty of German knowledge.

This German self-image was already changing before 1871 and the triumph of Prussian arms. In the subsequent period of the *Gründerjahre* it was to change still faster. Nor had it ever been entirely true to the facts. And this false, or partial, appreciation of the Germans by themselves and their foreign admirers had a double aspect. It seems clear, for example, that Matthew Arnold did not realise the extent to which the luminous, Hellenic side of German culture rested on—was indeed wrested from—something dark and daemonic in the German soul. This, we know, was Goethe's own view. Enlightenment was not natural to the Germans; it had to be fought for, and in the process all the demons of anarchy—the *Sturm und Drang* of his own youth and of the Romantics whom he came to loathe—cast out. The course of Goethe's self-enlightenment is plain to read in his writings. But very similar warnings against the daemonic element in the German soul are to be found in Heine, notably in that essay in which he under-

<sup>1</sup> The word "philistine" came into English from the German "*Philister*," and was first used to mean "an illiberal person" in 1827. It was originally used to denote "town" as against "gown."

took to explain the true nature of his compatriots to his French hosts, then held in thrall by Madame de Staël's *De l'Allemagne*:

German philosophy is an important affair, an affair that concerns the whole human race; and only our children's children will be in a position to decide whether we are rather worthy of blame or of praise for the circumstance that we produced our philosophy before producing our Revolution. . . . These doctrines have let loose revolutionary forces. . . . The *Naturphilosoph* will be the more terrible in that he is able to conjure up the daemonic forces of that pantheism of the ancient Teutons, to reawaken that joy in battle we find among them—a joy that is not simply a pleasure in destruction, or in winning the palm, but a glorying in the fight for its own sake. Don't laugh, I beg you, at this dreamer who claims to foresee enacted in the world of appearances what has so far existed only in the realm of *Geist*. German thunder, to be sure, is very German: it is clumsy, and it takes its own time. . . . But,

when it comes, you will see a spectacle performed in Germany compared with which the French Revolution will seem a harmless idyll. (*The Romantic School*, 1833)

NO DOUBT, IN RETROSPECT, it is easy to argue that Coleridge, who detected a "nimiety" in all Germans, saw more clearly than Arnold, who, combining the philhellene with the Germanophile, interpreted *Geist* optimistically as an "unclouded clearness of mind." (With what merriment would a later generation greet such an appraisal!) But there was a second error, of a more material order, underlying the Germanophilia of the mid-Victorians.

It was an error that Nietzsche—for all his worshipping at the shrine of Dionysus, the greatest Hellenist of them all—was quick to spot

### The New Germany

THE only really surprising aspect of the result of Federal Germany's election is that many people here find the result surprising.

Yet the voters' overwhelming rejection not only of the one undeniably anti-democratic, totalitarian party contesting the election (the Communists), but also of Herr von Thadden's rag-bag NPD, with its unsavoury mixture of extreme nationalists, Poujadists, and even ageing, irreconcilable Nazis, should not have caused anyone a moment's astonishment.

For the facts have for years now spelt out one marvellous and heartening truth.

The truth is not simply that Federal Germany has long since turned its back for ever on the dreadful past, from the ashes of which it sprang; the only people who could deny that are those whose political or psychological needs require them to maintain that Nazism still thrives in Western Germany.

The really important truth is that the world's youngest major state is one of the most complete, most stable, and most genuine democracies in the world. If you find that a paradox, make some comparisons.

With France, for instance. There, political groups may be banned by administrative fiat. In Federal Germany, before any political group, however blatantly totalitarian, may be proscribed, the Government has to satisfy a scrupulously independent court—the highest in the land—that the party is an actual, present danger to democracy.

In France, too, a group of dissident students last year began a movement which, in the end,

very nearly brought down not only the Government, but the Republic itself.

In Federal Germany, a similar movement was contained without touching the fabric of the State, and with far less bloodshed.

In Belgium, religious and separatist strife have again and again threatened the very existence of the nation, and battles between Fleming and Walloon have repeatedly been daily occurrences.

In Federal Germany, Protestant and Catholic regions co-exist in perfect harmony, and the cry is for more national unity, not less.

In the United Kingdom, one of our four countries is on the verge of civil war, a situation which may yet end in the suspension there of the democratic system itself.

In Federal Germany a proposed law which would have given the Government authority, in the most extreme circumstances of national danger, to suspend some of the provisions of the Constitution, was received with a gigantic and spontaneous volume of protest and was radically amended.

In Britain, too, it was not until 1965 that a law was passed making racial incitement and slanders illegal; in Federal Germany the passage of such a law was one of the first actions of the first post-war German Government.

In France, the totalitarian candidate for the Presidency gained one-fifth of the votes cast; in Italy, the totalitarian parties hold a third of the seats in Parliament. In Federal Germany, the Communists and NPD achieved only a derisory vote between them.

Which is where I came in.

Bernard Levin in the DAILY MAIL

in the years that followed 1871. Nietzsche knew that the victory of 1871, and the boom years that followed, had changed—or perhaps one should say, brought out—much in the German character as previously understood. The image of Germany and Germans that had been sold to Europe by Madame de Staël and Carlyle was that of a peaceful, law-abiding, philosophical race, backwards perhaps in manners and material civilisation, but only because intent upon deeper things.

Historically, this was not wholly false. In the days of her greatest artistic and intellectual glory Germany was indeed a weak and divided country, whose economy had stagnated since the decline of the merchant cities and the depredations of the Thirty Years War. But it was not reasonable of foreigners to assume that the Germans would wish to put up with this state of affairs. Common sense suggested that the Germans, once aware of their weakness, would wish to remedy it and become like other nations. Goethe was content to be a *Weltbürger*, a citizen of the world; but his younger contemporaries were not. Napoleon sowed the seeds of nationalism in Germany as surely as in the rest of Europe. By 1871, the *Zollverein* and the new iron and coal industries on the Ruhr were demonstrating that a united Germany had the potential to equal and perhaps to surpass the foremost industrial power of the age, Britain. In this, the lead possessed by German science was a major factor. Britain had lived, pragmatically, with her Industrial Revolution for a hundred years: in Germany it was to be a forced process, in which the need to compete with foreign rivals and apply the newest scientific knowledge was paramount. By 1900, Germany had in fact surpassed Britain in the production of steel and her science-based electrical and chemical industries were more fully developed. (It is a slow-dying myth that Germany's economic miracle occurred under Dr. Erhard's auspices. It was a reality before the turn of the century.)

Had the Germans changed? Undoubtedly they had. The cultural lead, as Nietzsche saw, had passed to the vanquished French. Germany was no longer the land of *Dichter und Denker*, except in nostalgic memory. She was bent now not on *Kultur* but on *Zivilisation*. She was—to use the terms that Werner Sombart, Thomas Mann's contemporary, popularised in his no less patriotic *Händler und Helden*—on the side of the shopkeepers rather than of the heroes...

except, of course, on the battlefields of Langemarck and Verdun.

THAT THE OUTSIDE WORLD should have held so false an image of Germany before 1914 does much, I believe, to explain the violence of the anti-German reaction following the outbreak of war. For it seems undeniable that the image Germany enjoyed, in England at any rate, was on the whole good: Herr Arminius was what came later to be called "a good German." True, Arnold writes that, "He has a harsh, arrogant, Prussian way of turning up his nose at things, and laying down the law about them." But he is quick to add: "As a lover of intellect I admire him, and as a seeker of truth I value his frankness." Herr Arminius, it will be recalled, scoffed equally at the despotism of the French Emperor and at the Liberalism of the English: he was after deeper things. He wanted to "introduce *Geist* into England." Like Thomas Mann, in his patriotic phase, Herr Arminius is "an unpolitical man." And Arnold does not hold it against him—as Arnold's admired Heine would have done, and as we are inclined to do. On the contrary, Herr Arminius' unpolitical approach is an aspect of his goodness. Not for him the scrumming of Barbarians and Philistines. Not for him the pursuit of mere political advantage, when deeper things—Truth itself—are at stake. As for his home life, is it not like that of "our own dear Queen"? When Father speaks, a hush descends on the assembled family; children are seen and not heard. And Herr Arminius is frugal in his ways: a glass of *Schnapps* after dinner, an occasional beer with friends at the *Stammtisch*, and plenty of pork and potatoes (*never* to be cut with a knife) for the growing family. Herr Arminius is, perhaps, a civil servant, a *Beamter*, and member as such of the most incorruptible (and self-righteous) ruling élite in Europe. He is likely to be, in common with most of his countrymen, a Protestant—a man one can look straight in the eye, and do good business with. He stands for sound craftsmanship and honest thrift. Herr Arminius, in fact, is almost an Englishman—or better still, a Scotsman. Is there higher praise?

NO WONDER THAT when the crash came, it came with the force of that "German thunder" Heine had predicted. Suddenly, Herr Arminius was no longer *bieder*, no longer pious and self-effacing and anxious for the world's good opinion. He

is no longer the "good" German. Indeed, there are no longer any good Germans at all. And here we encounter a strange discrepancy. For if we compare the two "German wars" (to use Mr. A. J. P. Taylor's term), we find that the anti-Germanism of the first, when the Germans were relatively well-behaved, far exceeded that of the second, when the Germans—or a large part of them—deliberately put themselves beyond the pale of European civilisation.<sup>2</sup> Curiously, much of the anti-German propaganda of that time—and it was the British who played Goebbels in the First War, not the unsubtle Ludendorff—was later to come true. There were no soap-making "corpse-factories" in the First World War ("kadaverfabrik" can only refer to animals); but in the Second they existed, though with an attempt at concealment, on a vast scale. Similarly, as Professor Fritz Fischer has shown,<sup>3</sup> British claims that the Germans were aiming, if not at world conquest, at least at territorial annexation and economic domination over Europe, have been proved subsequently to be not so far from the fact. There is clearly much to be said, then, for the view that the period 1914–1945 represented a Thirty Years War in the course of which the German nation aimed at *Weltgeltung*, at world great-power status. The roots of this will-to-power go back, as we have seen, to the victory of 1871, to the earlier rise of German industrial power, and not least to the patriotic emotions with which Kleist and the Romantics reacted to the Napoleonic onslaught. But the "good" German of Madame de Staël and Matthew Arnold was no longer the "typical" German. The typical German wanted *geltung*, acceptance as an equal among imperial partners; and it is surely not chance that the very word *geltung* brings to the ear an echo of *vergeltung*, revenge (the V-weapons were *Vergeltungswaffen*). Heine's *Furor Teutonicus*, compared with which the French Revolution would be an idyll, had broken upon us.

<sup>2</sup> "Halfway through the First World War, to make it go on, it became necessary to make the English hate the Germans 'by lies and propaganda' as they had never hated them before." Robert Graves (author of *Goodbye To All That*), reported in the *Evening Standard*, 23 October 1969.

<sup>3</sup> See *Germany's Aims in the First World War* (Chatto & Windus, 1967) and his recent *Krieg der Illusionen* (1969).

<sup>4</sup> See Martin Gilbert, *The Roots of Appeasement* (1967).

SO LONG AS THE WAR was on, not much could be done; where pro-Boers had been numerous, pro-Boches were few indeed. Yet the few who held out, most of them pacifist-socialists who saw the war as a feud between rival imperialist powers, were destined to exert an astonishing influence in the post-war period. These were remarkable individuals; yet individual proselytising alone cannot account for the post-war influence of Keynes, Russell, Strachey and so many others.

As we now see it, it was the peace-makers of Versailles who were illogical. Either the Germans were ravening wolves, a constant menace to European civilisation—in which case Clemenceau, Bottomley, and the Teutonophobes were right. Or the aspirations of the Germans were no greater than those of any major European power of the time: they should, accordingly, be permitted their "place in the sun." Neither course was pursued at Versailles. Enough was done, by demands for annexation and reparation, to enrage the Germans; but not enough to destroy their potentially dominant position in the centre of Europe, surrounded by small, divided, often scarcely viable states.

Nor, again, was there a settlement which could be compared with that achieved a century before at the Congress of Vienna. In these two contradictory, but not in themselves implausible critiques of the Versailles treaty we can see the germs, on the one hand, of future Vansittartism and, on the other, of Appeasement. It is by now a truism that it was the "good" elements in British opinion—from pacifist men of good will to liberal realists like Keynes—who saw the folly of the Versailles Treaty.<sup>4</sup> These elements were to be found, politically, on the Left of the political spectrum: the further right, the more intransigent the Hun-hating. It is ironical that, since World War II, the roles have been reversed. After 1945, the further left you went, the more intransigent grew the anti-Germanism; the further right, the willingness to accept the new Germany into the concert of Europe.

THE FORMULA on which most commentators have settled boils down to this: that what was right in the 1920s was wrong in the 1930s. Appeasement, intellectually, was certainly a product of the '20s; when it came to be applied, as a government policy, both the style and the moment were wrong. Still, it should be noted that appeasement, originally the conviction of a few, did quickly become the opinion of the majority.

How does one explain this? If the British had believed their own World War I propaganda, one would think that the image of the good German would have been shattered for ever. But this is to forget that the British, at least in the days of their power, were never good haters. Nor had they good memories. Again, there was a certain sense of guilt. Much of the propaganda was thought to have been overdone. Had not Germany, historically, *saved* Europe from the Huns? And was it not the domination of the Junker class, now apparently broken, that had been responsible for leading the "good Germans" astray? To a certain extent, the image of the good German—the British Tommy had often preferred the Germans he was fighting to the French he was defending—would seem to have survived the torrent of Lord Northcliffe's propaganda. But to say that the average Briton *liked* the Germans would be going too far. The returning trench-fighter might be a great deal less bitter than his non-combatant masters back in Blighty. But that is not to say much. The British had ignored the Germans safely for many centuries; the war being won, they could safely ignore them again.

THE BRITISH returned to their accustomed state of indifference to things German. With the notable exception of the Oxbridge left-wingers, people did not much care what the Germans got up to, provided it did not interfere with them. (It is well to remember that Roy Campbell's "Macspaunday" collective was less dominant, even in the '30s, than now appears: Bloomsbury, Eliot, and Leavis had no use whatever for German "*Kultur*.") Much the same went for the politicians. It was, after all, Winston Churchill who as Chancellor cut British armaments to the bone and instructed his strategists to work on the assumption that no major European war was likely within the next decade. There was also, as Dr. Granzow shows in her study of "British opinion and the emergence of Hitler"<sup>5</sup> a touching faith in "constitutionality," a principle which it was believed Hindenburg could be trusted—even after Brüning's policy of government by decree and Papen's dismissal of the Prussian administration—valiantly to uphold. Dr. Granzow's book

shows very clearly that the traditional British attitudes *had* survived. The tone is patronising and, at the same time, fatally reassuring:

Hitler is not a man but a megaphone. He has a surprising power of making patriotic noises and of shouting in perfect sincerity the most impossible nonsense against Parliaments and Jews and the Young Plan. In himself he is a lightweight. . . . Hitler is dramatic, violent, and shallow. But to his garish banner he has rallied honest and earnest elements, especially among the splendid young people of the German middle-classes. (*Observer*, 20 July 1930)

The notion persists that the body of the German nation is sound—indeed "splendid." The good German, despite Northcliffe, has come into his own again. There are bad elements in Germany—Junkers, agitators, militarists—but the young are on the side of the angels. Indeed: "the large majority of Germans are altogether for the Republic and peace." It is as if the pre-war picture of the Germans as a quiet, musical, *gemütlich*, fundamentally peace-loving people had survived the vicious anti-Hun propaganda of 1914-1918 (from which, incidentally, Hitler and Goebbels were to learn so much). It is also evident that actual knowledge of the condition of Germany—the effects of the Inflation, and then of the Depression, on so many young middle-class people—was very small. That it was precisely these "splendid young people" who were turning to Hitler and were about to help him to his first great electoral victory (in the autumn of 1930) was something that did not enter the minds of the British, left or right. Snob-bishness played a part, as did a reckless belief in the constitutional letter of the law. In so far as Hitler's triumph was seen as an ominous pointer, liberal newspapers like the *Manchester Guardian* had already found a moral. It was, characteristically, masochistic: it was really *we* who were to blame:

It is impossible to excuse Herr Hitler's incoherent campaign to unite the nation in a determination to repudiate its international obligations, but it is impossible also to ignore the essential justice of many of his claims (26 September 1930).

No sooner had the "impossible" Herr Hitler appeared on the horizon than the seeds of appeasement showed their first, shy growth.

THE STORY OF APPEASEMENT has been often, and well, told.<sup>6</sup> By comparison, the story of the growth of anti-appeasement, and of its after-

<sup>5</sup> Brigitte Granzow, *A Mirror of Nazism*. (Gollancz, 1964.)

<sup>6</sup> See Martin Gilbert and Richard Gott, *The Appeasers* (1963), in which Mr. Gilbert is more sharply condemnatory than in his later book.



effects up to the present day, has been oddly neglected. Intellectually, the problem is simply stated. The English had somehow to be persuaded to perceive the real Hitler, and not a Hitler of their predilections. Dr. Granzow emphasises how difficult this was: there was Hitler "the moderate," Hitler "the lightweight," Hitler "the megaphone," a comic figure performing at the behest of unknown puppet-masters. What very few observers seemed able to concede (right up to 1939, according to Dr. Granzow) was that Hitler was exactly what he claimed to be: the *Führer* of a mass movement, whose collective unconscious he represented, and which was ready to obey his every whim. The *Führerprinzip* was not a slogan: it described precisely how the movement worked—as the invariable failure of all attempts to challenge Hitler's authority soon made plain (Stennes, Otto Strasser, Röhm).

But to ask the British to accept the truth of this was to ask a great deal. It meant giving up all that was implied in the neo-hellenic view of Germany—*Geist*, rationality, Goethean classicism—and accepting the truth of that very different picture of the Germans Heine had drawn in *The Romantic School*. And in as much as it implied doing justice to the daemonic, Dionysiac element in the German soul, this process of understanding meant that Herr Arminius' (and Thomas Mann's) unpolitical pose had to be seen in a far more ambiguous light. Thomas Mann himself had realised this long before the denouement of 1933 (*Mario the Magician*, *The Magic Mountain*, *On a German Republic*); and was to give the definitive analysis of where this unpolitical German *Geist* could lead in *Doctor Faustus*. But Thomas Mann was a German, a disciple of Nietzsche, a fellow-wanderer "along the abyss." For the English, the full realisation of the nature of Adolf Hitler and of his hold over a large part of the German people was bound to lead to the abrupt extinction of the "good German," and open the door to an ultra-mephistophelean reappraisal of all things Teutonic.

It would seem that Coleridge had foreseen it all: "There is a *nimiety* in all Germans. It is the

national fault." Indeed. "*Germany belongs to us today/Tomorrow, the whole wide world*"—what are the words of the storm-troopers' famous marching song but the extreme expression in "the world of appearances" of Goethe's Faust's presumptuous "True, I know much; but all things would I know"?

And what of today? Is there still a "*nimiety*" in all Germans, or do they calmly accept their new station (perhaps with better grace than the English?) as a second-rank power growing fat meanwhile on the profits of their second economic miracle under the auspices of their new economic wizard, Dr. Schiller? And what do the English make of it all? Until recently, most observers would probably have qualified the British as anti-German almost to a man. This feeling was at its most frenzied, no doubt, among the intelligentsia—in particular the intelligentsia of the Left. On the Right, and here one must include the moderate labour Right, there was a mood of reluctant realism—certainly not one of enthusiasm. The Berlin problem, the division of Germany: all these were troublesome things, which one would rather be without, but to which one must give mildly sympathetic attention for the sake of some broader harmony (the Common Market, the Atlantic Pact).

And the public mood? It fluctuated between indifference and a readiness (especially among the pre-war generation) to believe the worst. The good German certainly made no comeback;<sup>7</sup> but there was general thankfulness that "the Germans" were not making trouble (when there was trouble, as over Berlin, there was an immediate tendency to put the blame on the Germans). The good German, one might say, had become once again the *quiet* German. True, when Dr. Strauss visited London in May 1969, the old anti-Teutonism raised its head.

Having wilfully abandoned the British Empire, we are to enter the German Empire instead. It is nothing less than Hitler's New Order which Herr Strauss offers, or rather seeks to impose on us . . .

(A. J. P. Taylor, *Sunday Express*, 25 May).

But most observers were astonished that Herr Strauss—in whom many had detected a *nimiety* in the past—should have received so unhostile a welcome. If Herr Strauss, the bull of Bavaria, could be received as just another quiet, hard-working German, surely some shift of public opinion must have been taking place, undetected by the pundits?

<sup>7</sup> I may be wrong on this point. *The Times* headed their first leader on Herr Brandt, the day after his election as Chancellor, "A GOOD MAN." How many other statesmen are apostrophised in this way? The Germans, apparently, remain either heroes or villains.

Is **THIS** really so? Certainly, there *seems* little doubt that the Germans have profited from the prevailing Europeanism of most sections of British public opinion. They have profited too, I think, by the workings of the generation gap. It is not merely that Hitler's war has receded in time, and that it is unloved parent-figures who nurse their anti-Germanism—the young are likely to see Western Germany as no more sinful (indeed, perhaps rather less so) than other capitalist nations, such as the United States. But reluctant realism and indifferent tolerance are clearly not going to be enough. Britain and Germany remain the two most powerful components in a reduced Europe. If Britain is bent on a European course, the chart will need to be redrawn. I have argued that one reason for the cultural remoteness of Britain and Germany in the past has been the existence of something like a North-South cultural axis, which has made interchange between the two nations not only both intermittent and incomplete, but also (to use the word Mr. Christopher Sykes charmingly uses for Adam von Trott's troubled relations with his Oxford friends, that paradigm of all Anglo-German relations) constantly "endangered":

On one occasion A. L. Rowse angrily asked Adam why the Germans were so prone to strident self-assertion, to aggressive emotionalism. . . . And Adam, with perfect honesty and rare insight, replied as follows: "Because unless we live in that way, we feel that we are nothing." Rowse was immensely shocked. He had been angered by Adam's defence of the German character; he was now equally exasperated by this candid self-criticism. The friendship was close to dissolution. (*Troubled Loyalty*, p. 90.)

Anglo-German relationships, then, on the personal or the political plane, are *endangered*. It is, of course, perfectly true that Anglo-French relationships can also be fraught with danger. But that is a different matter. I remember at my English school a rough and not undangerous game in which half of the school lined up at one end of a field and charged the other half, with singular ferocity, with the aim of touching down at the far end. Strangely, the game was called "French and English"—though at the time we were playing it our parents were engaged in the most murderous of all Anglo-German conflicts. In a similar way, the Anglo-French diplomatic conflict is an old game, played hard and yet played with a certain knowledge of and respect for the opponent. The French are admired by many and liked by few: emotion does not play

the part it has done in the Anglo-German relationship. There is no *Schwärmerei* and no *Hassliebe*; both sides are out for what they can get, and no quarter is asked or expected. Is such a relationship (*sachlich* would be the German word for it) possible between the British and the Germans? Can the chart be re-drawn, at this late date, so that a two-way channel of communication—to put it at its lowest—remains open between the two countries?

**A**T THE GOVERNMENTAL LEVEL relations between the two countries today are perhaps as good as they have ever been. Indeed, there exists an—on the face of it—rather surprising presumption that the Germans are "on our side"—in particular against the intransigent French. And this presumption has survived despite the obvious reluctance of the Germans to stand up to the French, in particular over the issue of Britain's entry into the Common Market. Now the General is gone, and Herr Brandt has arrived, things may be different. Or again, they may not—for the reluctance to play an activist role within the alliance seems to run very deep among the present generation of German leaders. But governmental accord will be of no avail if the public opinion of each country is at variance with the establishment view. It is easier, here, to answer for the Germans. There is no doubt that German opinion of all shades is anxious to see Britain in Europe—and for the best of reasons. For all her economic weakness, Britain remains *the* democracy. In political terms, her long-term stability is something which cannot be matched by Italy, France, or Germany—and, after the events of 1968, that is not unimportant. For almost all Germans this remains a priceless asset, to which the scientific-technological dowry that Britain can bring with her runs a good second. The wish to be "good friends" with England has existed in Germany since long before she became a nation; it has been frustrated, not least by the Germans themselves, but it persists. It seems likely that it will grow in direct proportion to the degree to which the British are willing to indulge it.

It is when one considers popular opinion that the doubts creep in. The present high level of tolerance is surely based at least as much on indifference as on considerations of national self-interest. So long as the Germans are not troublesome, they disappear from the headlines and the

public is well satisfied. But can the Germans be relied upon not to be "troublesome"? Surely not. For the closer Britain moves to Europe, the more she will inherit Europe's troubles, and the chief of these is precisely the division of Germany. The British, having shaken off the troubles of Aden and Malaysia, will wake up one fine day to find the German problem on their doorstep. What will their response be? To judge from past form, this is the point at which anti-German reactions become tense in this country. Yet the Germans, in so far as they desire re-unification, are bound to plead guilty to the charge of *patriotism*. And if one thing is clear from the controversy over von Trott and his circle, it is that patriotic Englishmen are not prepared to concede even a normal degree of patriotism to Germans. It is the fear, once again, of *nimiety*. Patriotism, in the case of the Germans, is nationalism (and to say nationalism is as good as to say neo-Nazism). Yet what the British are being asked to do is in effect to underwrite German—as also Italian or French—*patriotism*. It is hardly surprising that few Britons have chosen to see the matter in this light.

ADMITTEDLY, IT IS A LOT TO ASK. But to ask for less is to shirk the deeper problems of European unity. That the Macmillan government did just that is now generally agreed; and the same charge will almost certainly be laid against the Wilson administration. Yet, given the precarious state of popular opinion, what else could have been expected? And are the British entirely wrong, in any case, in their sceptical view of the Germans? Five years ago, I asked a German Professor of Politics, a returned refugee with great sensitivity to the mood of young people, what he took to be the present trend of opinion. He replied that he found a newly awakened patriotism among the young, much concerned

with East Germany, and as strong on the Left as on the Right. Recently, during the student troubles, I reminded him of his prediction. Yes, he confessed, he had been wrong; things had taken a different turn, and leftist internationalism was now all the rage.

Should one be alarmed, I wondered, at this sudden change of direction? On the face of it, not: for it represents a turn from nationalism to internationalism, from something held to be profoundly dangerous to something apparently more reassuring. But what is likely to strike the average Englishman is not the direction, but the underlying *instability* of mood suggested by this example. How can he tell what will be the prevailing mood in five or ten years time? After all, the German students have been demonstrating to the full that *nimiety* in the national character of which foreigners have always been uneasily aware—though one should add that German student agitation (unlike in the United States) appears to have affected the democratic electoral process not a jot.

There is, perhaps, another reassuring note in the recent events. For the Germans, instead of moving against the main trend of European history as in the past, are now behaving very much like other Europeans. That there will one day be a German patriotism again is something we shall have to allow for and be prepared to tolerate. But there is no longer a "German ideology," a mode of thinking (like Adam von Trott's Hegelianism) that is impenetrable, and even repellent, to other Europeans. Germany's problems are very much the problems of any advanced industrial state, and strikingly similar to those of Britain, a middle-sized power with much the same possibilities and limitations. It is perhaps the rapid realisation of this in West Germany, and the rather slower realisation of it in Great Britain, that offers the best chance of healing our much-endangered relationship.

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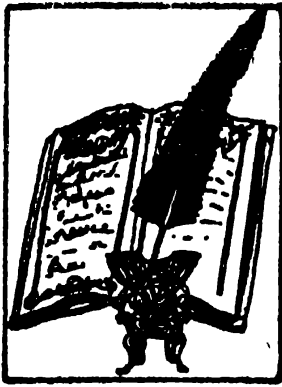
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# Column

IN A LETTER ON another page of ENCOUNTER, Professor Noam Chomsky takes me to task for what he thinks the distorted account of his political position which I gave

recently in this column. I am sorry if I have been unfair to Professor Chomsky, whom I greatly admire for his work in linguistics; and at the same time I am not at all surprised that he should complain of my treatment of him. If one tries to summarise in a few sentences the views of a political publicist who writes and speaks as copiously as Professor Chomsky, one will almost certainly neglect some aspects of his thought in favour of what one takes to be its most characteristic and consistent features. After all, Hitler sometimes spoke like a man of compassion; Nietzsche sometimes praised the virtues of Christianity; one would be foolish to think that such moments conveyed the essence of what they had to say.

From this point of view, I really do not think that Professor Chomsky has much ground for complaint. He has so repeatedly and virulently condemned American foreign policy, in dogmatic and absolute terms that admit of no discussion; and he has so strongly insisted (most recently in the *New Left Review*, Oct. 1969, pp 21-34) that it is the inevitable reflection of a "senseless, irrational and predatory economy," of a "criminal society," that it is a little late now to claim that what he really meant was to extol the freedom with which America endows the intellectual, and the political influence which this gives him. To Professor Chomsky, American democracy, as it actually functions today, is a wicked and evil force, and American intellectuals are, except in so far as they agree with Professor Chomsky, so totally involved in the military-technological establishment which controls it that they refuse to exploit the freedoms which are available to them. Their guilt is thus compounded. Free to be virtuous with Professor Chomsky, they prefer to sin with Kennedy and L.B.J. and Nixon and the criminal society of which they are the ideological agents. *Corruptio optimi pessima*.

So much so indeed that, for Professor Chomsky, it is not merely futile but degrading to argue or discuss with them the issues which lie closest to his heart, in particular the war in Viet Nam.

By entering into the arena of argument and

counter-argument, of technical feasibility and tactics, of footnotes and citations, by accepting the presumption of legitimacy of debate on certain issues, one has already lost one's humanity. This is the feeling I find almost impossible to repress when going through the motions of building a case against the American war in Viet Nam.

After such words, I feel almost guilty in having provoked Professor Chomsky to discuss "footnotes and citations." Does he not fear to lose his humanity? Perhaps it makes all the difference that here it is Professor Chomsky's own words which are in question, and not Professor Arthur Schlesinger's or Professor Gabriel Jackson's or those of all the other liberal scholars whom he castigates with such withering scorn in his essay on "Objectivity and Liberal Scholarship." Yet alas! his letter seems to me strangely lacking in the kind of candour which one might expect from a writer of such delicate moral sensibility as Professor Chomsky. I have not yet compared the first with the second American printing or the British edition of *American Power and the New Mandarins*, but I hope that in them he has made a better job of amending his garbled "quotation" from Harry Truman than he does in his letter.

For even now he seems unable to get the President's words right, though he must presumably have verified them, so that his letter hardly removes my doubts of the Professor's good faith. What President Truman actually said was: "Freedom of worship—freedom of speech—freedom of enterprise. It must be true that the first two of these freedoms are related to the third." As Professor Chomsky now confesses, his original version of Truman's words came not from Truman at all, but from a paraphrase in a book by D. F. Fleming; for his new version he offers no source at all. Is it too strong a word to say that he has invented it?

Now one might easily feel that it is really degrading to have to discuss footnotes and citations in this way; though not, perhaps, in quite the sense that Professor Chomsky intended. But what seems equally objectionable is the obduracy with which Professor Chomsky goes on to claim that, despite his "careless and inexcusable error" in misquoting Truman's words, the interpretation placed upon the speech in which they occurred remains valid, indeed "accurate and perceptive." For the speech in question was an appeal by Truman for economic internationalism and the re-establishment of world trade, and it was specifically directed against the resurgence of protectionism and economic nationalism among American businessmen. By no stretch of the imagination could Truman be held to be saying that "The whole world should adopt the American system" or that "The American system

can survive in America only if it becomes a world system." Those were neither Truman's words nor what he meant, and distortion could hardly go further. Couldn't I plead with Professor Chomsky to cut the whole wretched passage out of his book?

Lastly, Korea. On page 4 of *American Power and the New Mandarins* I read: "Three times in a generation American technology has laid waste a helpless Asian country," and in case one might have difficulty in identifying the victims Professor Chomsky makes it clear that he means Japan, Korea, and Viet Nam. Now it would be possible to argue (though I think it would be false) that Viet Nam was a helpless Asian country; and whether it is or not, it would be possible to hold, as I do, that American policy in Viet Nam has been a colossal error. It would be harder to argue that Korea was helpless or that America was exclusively responsible for the Korean war; but hardest of all, I think, to argue that Japan was a helpless victim of aggression or that the war against Japan was a purely American concern. Certainly I know of no Englishman who would regard either of these last two propositions as having the slightest relation to reality.

It is precisely because Professor Chomsky so dogmatically equates and confounds entirely distinct historical circumstances, different in themselves and arising out of different historical situations, that I think that in such matters he takes leave of rational discourse. Of course, he has to do this if he is to prove his underlying thesis that American policy in Asia has followed a consistent pattern dictated by the uncontrollable aggressive drives of American economic imperialism; but that doesn't make his procedure any more rational or his thesis any more plausible.

THE TROUBLE WITH Professor Chomsky is that his view of American policy in Asia is determined, not by the facts of the case, but by a prior belief, which is essentially a moral and emotional one, in the inherent evil of the American power structure. I deplore his approach, not merely because I think it hinders, rather than advances, the cause which, strangely enough, both Professor Chomsky and I have at heart; that is to say, the earliest possible termination of the war in Viet Nam. For if the end of the war is to be achieved in the foreseeable future, it will be as the result of the pressure brought upon the American government, not by those who believe that America pursues evil in Asia because it is in her nature to do so, but by ordinary Americans who have come to see American policy in Viet Nam as a perversion, not a revelation, of what America really is. The

millions of Americans who took part in "the Moratorium" last month will not be strengthened in their opposition to the war by being told that it is, after all, only the logical conclusion of a policy which America pursued equally in Japan and Korea, nor will others be persuaded to join them. They might even be persuaded that, if this is really the case, there must be something to be said for the war in Viet Nam (as, according to even the latest Gallup Poll, a majority still do.)

I deplore Professor Chomsky's almost hysterically moralistic attitude also because, as it seems to me, it offers a kind of mirror image of the approach to problems of foreign policy which has led America into her most grievous mistakes in Viet Nam. The difference is only that where cold war warriors see white, Professor Chomsky sees black, and *vice versa*; but both see the war as essentially a conflict between good and evil, like some mythological war in heaven between angels and demons.

Professor Chomsky's view is the obverse of that which sees any conflict in which America is involved as a war against the powers of darkness and ignorance which resist America's mission to civilise the world. Mr. George Kennan has long ago pointed out the fatal influence which this has had on American foreign policy; but its opposite is no less tragic. And neither can offer a basis for peace, because neither can admit that there is any middle ground between victory and defeat; how can good make peace with evil? Peace, if and when it comes, will not be the work of ideologues and moralists for whom everything is in black and white; it will be the result of a protracted process of negotiation, discussion, argument, debate, compromise; all those procedures in fact which Professor Chomsky, from his lofty moral eminence, despises most. For the peace-makers there can be no issue on which the legitimacy of debate is suspended.

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THE PUBLICATION of Christopher Booker's *The Neophiliacs* has attracted considerable attention; and this is as it should be, for the book has an interesting theme to expound and Mr. Booker has worked very hard to make the best possible case for it. Only, unfortunately, in doing so he has chosen, or has been driven, to raise a slightly crazy ideological structure which obscures rather than enhances the very real merits his book possesses.

For Mr. Booker has not been content to compile an extremely well documented anthology of some of the more startling idiocies of our time, of a kind which would have given intense pleasure to Flaubert and would provide the

material for a modern *Bouvard et Pécuchet* of the contemporary intellectual world. This he has done admirably; but it has not been enough for him to expose folly, he has also tried to explain it, and this has led him to put forward the theory that between 1955 and 1965 England underwent a kind of collective trauma, which he divides into six distinct phases, from which we are only now gradually waking into reality.

I can find very little objective reason for believing Mr. Booker's theory to be true, and indeed it is the kind of theory for which it would be impossible to find objective verification. But in reading his book I was frequently reminded that others before Mr. Booker have believed that man's life, and history itself, runs in cycles which, if we have sufficient insight into the *Spiritus Mundi*, we can calculate accurately and precisely; and others also have believed that such cycles are related to the night-side, the strictly lunatic, or what Mr. Booker calls the *Nyktomorphic*, aspect of our lives. I kept thinking in particular of Yeats' poem, *The Phases of the Moon*:

*Twenty-and-eight the phase of the moon,  
The full and the moon's dark and all the crescents,  
Twenty-and-eight, and yet but six-and-twenty  
The cradles that a man must needs be rocked in:  
For there's no human life at the full or the dark.*

Mr. Booker seems to share Yeats' belief that our lives are our dreams working themselves out, so that we become phantoms in the mind of the brooding spirit whose fantasies we are. But a belief that can achieve grandeur and nobility in the words of a great poet can also become ridiculous in what is strictly speaking a work of sociology. Yeats' vision of the eternally repeated cycle of human history embraced all of man's most ancient and most modern myths; in the moon's twelfth phase:

*Athena takes Achilles by the hair,  
Hector is in the dust, Nietzsche is born,  
Because the hero's crescent is the twelfth.*

Mr. Booker's cycle is concentrated into one decade of the recent past, and the gods and goddesses of his mythology are pop stars, pop painters, pop personalities, pop interior decorators and pop Royalties. At the end of his book he gives a list of the 200 people who form the

*dramatis personae* of his dream cycle; it reads like a *Who's Who* of the fashion and entertainment business.

With such material Mr. Booker tries very hard to convince us that during the 1950s and '60s a genuine revolution took place in English life. But what kind of revolution was it whose Robespierre and Danton were Kenneth Tynan and Francis Wyndham, whose Philippe Egalité was Lord Snowden, and whose Madame Roland was Mary Quant? And whose Voltaire was Malcolm Muggeridge? Most of all, what is one to think of a revolution which was played out in the pages of *Queen* and *The Observer* but left English political institutions, her class structure, her property relations totally unchanged?

One would have to conclude that it was, at most, a *Schein-revolution*, a matter entirely of fashion and style, in which people changed their ideas as they changed their interior decoration. With the best will in the world it is impossible to accept Mr. Booker's thesis that it was a profound stirring of England's spiritual and emotional depths, repeating a cycle of Fantasy, Dream, Frustration, Nightmare, Death Wish and Fade into Reality, which according to him is the classical pattern of revolution in the modern age. It is equally difficult to follow Mr. Booker in his account of the Reality which we are now Fading Into, a kind of Muggeridgean Christianity which has in fact, in the *Sunday Telegraph* and in *The Spectator*, given its papal blessing to his book. Reading it, I was reminded that for Yeats Christianity itself was only a part of the lunar cycle of history:

*The darkness drops again; but now I know  
That twenty centuries of stony sleep  
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,  
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?*

Somehow I do not find it absurd to believe that Yeats' Rough Beast has indeed revealed itself in our time; I do find it wholly absurd to think that it manifested itself in the form, however disagreeable, of David Frost or any other of Mr. Booker's revolutionaries. And even I, who have few claims to be a Christian, find it blasphemous as well as ridiculous to suggest, as Mr. Booker does, that Christ came into the world to save us from Tynan. Mr. Booker must have got Him mixed up with Malcolm M.



## Aldershot Wives

Adventurers conscripted by bright adverts,

they too keep their square; all round the perimeter of  
Montgomery Road, Alexander Drive, Haig Avenue and Wellington Road,  
the colours of their regiment hang bravely, red  
and white and blue,  
in ten thousand gardens.

Grey-uniformed, the houses stand, stolid, on parade  
always ready for inspection; the gas-stoves  
blanco'd, floors polished like fire-  
extinguishers. They too are fighting a war, though

they have not yet identified the enemy. Much laughter  
in the Naafi stores disguises uncasiness, a sixth-sense  
of defeat. A fifth-column lurks, a traitor, the war of nerves,  
of waiting; the  
repetitive manoeuvres,  
making life by numbers. The dusty road, Officers  
and Other Ranks, floated by childish shouts, are a  
Troy of slow private pyres, a Thermopylae  
of neurosis, a Somme of costly small advances

and withdrawals. The longed-for foreign posting is an  
Arnhem; hoping to take the enemy by surprise, they find  
that they are floating down into desert or rice-fields,  
but still encased,  
pincered, in their own skin, and  
habits, and habits of others, collected obsessively  
over the years like cigarette-  
coupons. They must land to a  
withering crossfire of them-

selves. Even when summer signals shirtsleeve order, the swim-  
suited wives are still under siege. Their task, clinging like  
identity-discs, to prime the weapons who prime the  
weapons, to take  
them, shot and dirty, in  
the afternoon, pull them through in the silently  
diligent bedspaces of the night,  
and send them out shining and highmorale-ed  
for the morning muster. Four tarnished letters in

Quo fas et gloria ducunt, are the k-rations of sex.  
No rescue-column, flamboyant and bugled, will come spurring  
kicking up the sandgrain houses of the Thames Vallëy,  
to rescue them;  
or if they do, they'll find  
that the defiant phalanx of bayonet-aerials  
jutting over the battlements, glinting,  
are held up by uncanny silence,  
a gallant stratageni, a last beau geste.

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# THEATRE

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## Life & Death of the Common Man

By John Weightman

IT IS NOT OFTEN that one sees, on successive evenings, two new plays such as Peter Nichols' *The National Health* (Old Vic) and David Storey's *The Contractor* (Royal Court), capable of warming the cockles of the heart, that fragile pump which, unaccountably and contrary to what one might have expected from the early publicity brochure, is not covered by a 70-year guarantee. Indeed, the Supplier is remarkably unreliable as regards all the parts. As I feel the cockles of my heart warm up, I wonder if my liver and my prostate gland will stand the strain. My hair and my teeth are little more than a memory; according to the optician, my eyes parted company some time ago; a cough shatters my aching lungs and is echoed collectively throughout the theatre. This is what is called the prime of life, when the mature brain is at one with the disciplined body. Why, then, do I have the impression of travelling inside a ramshackle vehicle which keeps losing its bits as we proceed along life's interesting way? If only, like G. B. Shaw, I could feel that I was part of the Great Whole, and that the universe was doing something significant, even though inscrutable, with my puny identity.

The reason why I warm to Mr. Nichols and Mr. Storey is that, unless I am much mistaken, their plays are inspired by just such a dumb wonderment about the purpose of it all. Mr. Nichols sets his action inside the men's ward of a hospital, where seven patients are shown in various stages of physical and mental decline, being looked after by nurses and doctors with that brisk, impersonal amiability which brings tears to the eyes when one is subject to it oneself. Outside hospital, a man has a social personality and can, to some extent, draw a veil over his physical inadequacies; he can also, up to a point, choose his associates. But in a hospital ward, he is primarily a body, which is openly discussed and lectured about with the help of slides, as only one interchangeable instance among many. In a sense, this is strangely

satisfying, since you feel like a parcel that was posted by Life at a given point, and that you yourself are no longer responsible for the date and hour of delivery; the initiative can be left to the National Health Service. At the same time, it is disturbing to find that one's social personality has largely evaporated and that one nevertheless has to make conversation with a lot of people, with whom one may have little in common except the general human condition. The real contact is with the other patients, because the doctors and nurses, however good, cannot see their charges as individuals; they can only assess their amenability or obstreperousness as bodies requiring treatment (except, perhaps, in those rare cases where a susceptible nurse becomes interested in a handsome young man), and so they adopt a professional manner which irons out all remaining differences. The cheeriness of the nurses, the severity of Sister, the regal banality of Matron, the urgent style of the Great Surgeon, who charges in with his aides-de-camp like a Napoleonic marshal inspecting the field of battle, the trance-like exhaustion of the houseman—all these things are marvellously stereotyped and provide a ready-made theatre of personae, if one has the strength to enjoy it.

Mr. Nichols puts these points on to the stage quite excellently, rather in the "Carry-On" manner, but without the commercial squeamishness of the "Carry-On" films. The patient with stomach cancer actually rants and raves until he is silenced by an injection; the neurotic homosexual with a duodenal ulcer, muttering over his basket-work, builds up a genuine vista of desolation; the senile are senile and then, during a brief period, recover a semblance of humanity. Mr. Nichols has somehow solved the problem of making boring, suffering people both funny and touching, without turning them into caricatures or departing from the immediate truth in any way. I could not detect a single false note or exaggeration; even his satire on the religious visitations in the ward—a jolly West Indian

parson who crosses the dead off his list with gusto, and a wraith-like dowager fluting a simple version of the Gospel—which may seem excessive to someone who has never been in hospital, corresponds exactly to my experience. I only wonder why he missed out the comedy of physiotherapy sessions and the raucousness of the ex-prostitute in charge of the newspaper trolley.

HOWEVER, I THINK his play has two weaknesses. In the first place, he strains too hard to offset the grimness of life in the ward by interpolating comic scenes which parody *Dr. Kildare* and *Dr. Findlay*. These are introduced by a medical orderly (Jim Dale), who acts as a kind of Mephistophelean chorus or master of ceremonies. It is a splendid idea to give the most intense vitality to the man whose job it is to lay out the dead, and Mr. Dale plays the part to perfection. But the jokes in the parodic scenes are much too feeble, and are too transparently brought in as light relief. It would be quite enough to have Mr. Dale on his own each time to make some diabolic comment on the relationship between life and death, and perhaps to expatiate bawdily on the hospital at large. He has, in fact, one or two excellent scenes of this kind which could have been developed. The parodies cheapen the whole effect and spoil the end with a clutter of dancing and noise.

Secondly, as the play stands, it can hardly be said to have any artistic centre of gravity. It is, in no sense, a satire on the National Health Service, which is shown as functioning quite efficiently. There are moments when things get out of hand, but this is bound to happen in the best-regulated system, and I cannot imagine that Mr. Nichols is making a political point. One of my own real-life memories of hospital is a tragicomic scene in which an exhausted houseman, who had forgotten to get the patient's signature before a massive abdominal operation, had to read out the ghastly document in a loud voice and at break-neck speed before the unfortunate man succumbed to sedation; I would not, however, breathe a word of criticism of that hospital. "The National Health" is, presumably, an ironic title meaning the universal sickness of man. If this sickness is seen against a background of total agnosticism, it is difficult to put into a positive metaphysical perspective, but there is all the greater need to find some aesthetic pattern. An amplification of Mr. Dale's Mephistophelean part might have solved the problem. If you want to accuse the universe, which is basically what Mr. Nichols is doing, you have to fall back on the devil. Perhaps he actually intends the final dance as a diabolical *danse macabre*, but it doesn't come over as such.

IN THE CONTRACTOR, Mr. Storey too is dealing with a collective situation and trying to give the flavour of life as it is lived from minute to minute by average, unremarkable people. His characters, instead of being patients in a hospital, are workmen assembled in the grounds of a Yorkshire mansion, or at least "big house," to put up a marquee for the wedding of the boss' daughter. The tent is erected in Act I; the floor is laid and the interior is decorated in Act II; then the whole thing is dismantled, after the wedding, in Act III. This is a brilliant piece of stage-craft which means, I suppose, that the play can never be performed by amateurs or provincial repertory companies, because they would have great difficulty in achieving the manual skill and precise timing which make Lindsay Anderson's direction at the Royal Court so remarkable. The tent invades the stage and, in a sense, is the most prominent character in the play, like the chairs in Ionesco's *Les Chaises* or the corpse in *Amédée*. But the intention is only obliquely absurdist. The tent is really a symbol of collective achievement; it rises from the ground and embodies such perfection as it is capable of, in spite of the bickering and the personal inadequacies of the individuals who are doing the job. Looking at the finished object, without having heard the dialogue, one could not guess at the conflicting emotions which accompanied its construction. This is a poetic mystery which clings to all man-made objects; faced with any fairly elaborate arrangement of material—the Roman Wall, for instance—we sense that it is a silent token of non-recoverable truth. Mr. Storey gives us the truth, or at least a good part of it, along with the creation of the object, and yet we see that the truth slides off the object, as it were, through the constant erosion of time, leaving only the object itself in what a 19th-century philosopher would no doubt have called its enigmatic quiddity. This is a beautifully realised conception, whether Mr. Storey intended it consciously or not.

At the same time, the tent can be taken as a symbol of the tragic pointlessness of human endeavour. It has been made in the factory belonging to the boss, a disillusioned self-made man, who is going through the social motions expected of him by having a grand reception, without being in any sense a snob. He has a grudging respect for objects and for the well-finished job, but he is also touched by philosophical unease. He insists on the task being well done, but he doesn't really know why, and in this he differs from his aged father, a superannuated rope-maker, who wanders round with bits of rope and the simple conviction that the making of rope was a complete way of life. The boss' son is different again from him and,

after a university education, has opted out of responsibility altogether in favour of a wandering existence. So, in two generations, the transition has been made from total identification with a craft, through commercial success, to total alienation. Nevertheless, the tent goes up as a social gesture that no one fully believes in, and its frivolous decorations do not correspond to any definite taste. Then, it is soiled and torn by the wedding—more or less raped, in fact, by the unseen strangers for whom it had been prepared—and it is dismantled again as if it had never existed.

A third purpose of the tent is to allow the workmen, the boss and the boss' family to talk to each other as the work proceeds. Mr. Storey is just as good as Mr. Nichols at catching the exact ring and movement of uneducated, non-intellectual dialogue. Points that could not be made consecutively arise naturally from the rhythms of work, or from the constant attempts to avoid work. And again, people who might be expected to be boring are made extremely interesting. The fluent Irish bully and his side-kick, the half-wit who knows he is a half-wit, the ex-jail bird, the resentful weakling, in short a group of unemployables are dragooned into activity by the boss, who feels no social superiority but is as affectionately contemptuous as an American Southerner dealing patriarchally with Negroes.

It is clear that no one has any particular interest in the job in hand, and yet it gets done to a running fire of conversation which expresses the workmen's need to get some entertainment out of the situation by bullying and bawdy and to maintain their dignity in their own eyes, even

though they know themselves to be the lowest of the low. Being at the bottom of the social scale, they are dimly conscious of enjoying the freedom which comes from the impossibility of sinking any further, and so they can talk back to the boss. Yet they have no solidarity against him, and their internal skirmishes with each other are more important than their relationship to him. The acting of these various parts is quite impeccable and avoids the usual pitfalls of broad humour or quaintness. I don't think I have ever seen a better realistic performance.

YET IN SPITE OF the praise I have just lavished upon it, the play as a whole leaves me rather dissatisfied. Something is missing. As my memory probes the structure, I think I feel a softness in the treatment of the boss' alienated son and his slightly genteel family. It is true that people who have risen out of the working class often produce an impression of unreality or indefiniteness because their social contours have dissolved, and I suppose that Mr. Storey couldn't bring himself to put yet another ranting, alienated hero on the stage. In the first two acts he keeps hinting at stresses and strains within the family which one expects to be made explicit in the final act, when the latent hostility between the workmen bursts out most crudely. Instead, everything remains vague, as if Mr. Storey had been seduced by the idea of some latter-day *théâtre du silence*, and the son drifts away again without his attitude ever having become clear. It is almost as if the play were the first episode in a serial, to be amplified in later instalments.

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## NOTES & TOPICS

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*Letter from Paris*

### Decline of the French Left

AT THE END OF the War, during which the greater part of the French Right compromised itself with Vichy, the Left in France was practically everything. Today, twenty-five years later, it is practically nothing. How has that come about? During this quarter-of-a-century France has undergone a tremendous transformation: its industry is more modern, its commerce more rationalised, its agricultural economy less overpopulated and more profitable—a metamorphosis the details of which have been well described in *The New French Revolution* by John Ardagh.<sup>1</sup> Left-wing publicists and theorists such as Serge Mallet have written books with titles such as *The New Peasants* and *The New Workers*, thus indicating the change to a more productive and more efficient society. While the middle class was formerly predominantly represented by small traders and business men, artisans, and small and medium manufacturers who banded together to resist the demands of productivity and price reductions—big industry often reacted in exactly the same way—today there is a broad middle sector of experts and technocrats who think about profitability, rationalisation, and planning. Under both the Fourth and the Fifth Republics there has been a mixture of private and state economy, of free market and planning. The Renault works are an example of efficient state industry; Jean Monnet created a type of elastic, “concerted” planning which experts from other countries came to study.

The first puzzling fact that confronts us is that a country that has felt the spur of progress, that has become aware of the deficiencies and backwardness of a traditional, autocratic capitalism and, broadly speaking, has made considerable advances along the road to a modern industrial and welfare society has, unlike all the other democratic nations in Europe, failed to develop a strong Social Democratic party capable of

acting either as an effective opposition or as partner or principal in a national government. What we see instead is a weakened and, so far as the non-Communist part of it is concerned, numerically greatly reduced and divided Left that has been more unprepared and more helpless in the face of each and every crisis of the régime that it opposes—until the disaster in the parliamentary elections of 1968. In the second round of the recent presidential election, it was unable even to present itself as an opponent.

Whatever crisis of ideology or policy there may be in the reformist movements in other societies, France is a special case. Her economic and social development is far from being so different from that of other European nations as is her political development, as expressed in the two phenomena of Gaullism and the powerless Left.

There is also another factor that makes this weightlessness of the Left seem a kind of negative political miracle to the foreign observer, namely the fact that both to Karl Marx and to contemporaries of the revolution of May 1968 France was the country *par excellence* of the Great Revolution of the Left. That was what it was from 1789 right through 1830 and 1848, and from the Paris Commune to the Popular Front of 1936, the nationalisations and social reforms of the post-1944 governments, and finally the May riots, associated with the great and well-disciplined general strike.

Left-wing revolutionism is a living tradition in France; even arch-conservative parties include the word *gauche* in their names. Gaullists do not want to sit on the right in the National Assembly; some Gaullist groups call themselves left-wing Gaullists, but no one has yet described himself as a right-wing Gaullist.

And now we have seen a presidential election in which the four Left-wing candidates together failed to attract one-third of the votes (and that in the absence of de Gaulle, who always managed personally to attract many Left-wing voters). Is this a chance, an accident, a passing eclipse, after which the light of Left-wing ideas and hopes will soon illuminate France again? Anyone who has been just as surprised by the dramatic changes in France during the past few years as any “non-specialist” will carefully refrain from making prophecies. Let me therefore not try to read the future, but restrict myself to what has happened before our eyes.

THERE IS, in the first place, the Socialist Party, which until recently archaically described itself as the *SFIO*, an abbreviation for “French Section of the Workers’ International,” and in the immediate post-war period seemed to have legitimate hopes of successfully competing with

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<sup>1</sup> Secker & Warburg, 84s.

the Communists. It has undergone a gradual and—with a few exceptions, as in 1956—steady decline from 23% to 5% of the vote, and even if this last figure—representing the votes cast for Gaston Defferre against Pompidou—is not to be regarded as valid because many Socialists voted for the centre candidate (Alain Poher) while others voted for other Left candidates, it has lost nearly three-quarters of its vote. What was the cause of this?

If we regard political developments as being attributable, not only to the working of anonymous social forces, but also to decisions made by individuals in positions of political power, it is tempting to put the chief blame on Guy Mollet, the secretary-general of the *SFIO* since August 1945. Mollet, an English language teacher from Arras (the mayor of which he has been for many years), originally prevailed against the candidate supported by the great and prestigious Socialist leader Léon Blum. The radical policy for which he then stood was a *rapprochement* with the Communists, repudiation of opportunism and reformism and resistance to the menace of *embourgeoisement*. Since then, however, he has himself contracted electoral alliances at Arras with the Radical Socialists (1956), the Gaullists (1958), the Communists (1962), the Popular Republican Party, the *MRP* (1965), and again with the Communists (1967). He is sharp and caustic in his comments on other parties. Of the Communists he has said: "They are not Left of us but East of us," and of the *MRP*: "This party should simply not exist." His, too, is the often quoted phrase: "Our Right is the stupidest in the world." Of any Socialist who opposed him he would say that the man was nothing but owed everything to the party, and of other politicians that, in so far as they did not belong to the *SFIO*, they were at most "second best." Of Pierre Mendès-France he delivered himself of the pronouncement that "he is not one of us, but he is the best of the rest..." ("*Il n'est pas des nôtres, mais le meilleur des autres.*")

Under the Fourth Republic Mollet was five times entrusted with the task of trying to form a government, but only once, in February 1956, did he become Prime Minister; and during his period of office the capitulation to the French settlers in Algeria and the Suez expedition took place. In 1958 he played the decisive part in overthrowing the last Prime Minister of the Fourth Republic—Pflimlin—and bringing about the advent of General de Gaulle. Before the presidential election of 1965 he engineered the failure of the campaign to put forward Gaston Defferre, the Socialist mayor of Marseilles, as candidate and tried to secure support for the liberal Pinay before declaring himself satisfied

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with Mitterand as a "unity" candidate. In the latest campaign he again first tried to block Defferre's candidature and then did all in his power to weaken him. For him there are three kinds of possible political allies. In presidential elections they can be sought on the Right; in parliamentary elections the favourites are the Communists; and when it comes to forming a government they are unspecified. This is not so much guile as the reflection of a definite French electoral logic, in which he is taken to be an undisputed expert.

Five days after he became Prime Minister he recalled General Catroux, the liberal Resident in Algeria, whom he had just appointed, and replaced him by the narrowly nationalistic Socialist Robert Lacoste, who looked only to the French settlers. But he was not the first Socialist whose only view of *décolonisation* was stubborn resistance to it. There was never a group of French Socialists similar to the Fabians in the British Labour Party who thought out the problems of Empire. Conversations with the Vietnamese were broken off under the Socialist Minister Marius Moutet; and under the Socialist Resident in Algiers Naegelen the elections were so blatantly manipulated by the administration that many Algerians who had hitherto been *assimilationistes* were turned into rebels.

It took a Nationalist general coming from the Right to carry out the *décolonisation* in face of which the *SFIO* failed completely, not least because it had many members in Algeria among French officials, particularly the police, but had no idea how to respond to the slogans of the *fellagha*. The first attempt at a policy of understanding in relation to the Algerians was made by Pierre Mendès-France, who ended the Viet Nam war and instituted a policy of reconciliation with Tunisia. He was supported by Gaullists such as the Minister Fouchet, and by Marshal Juin, while Guy Mollet forbade Socialists who were willing to do so to enter the only reform-minded government of the Fourth Republic.

Mollet is characterised, not only by this lack of any great reform policy, but also by a combination of practical opportunism with unchanged revolutionary doctrine. The *SFIO* is the only great Social Democratic party that has not had a "Godesberg" (to use the German formula), *i.e.*, has not revised its programme or changed its outlook; only a few years ago a circular on party doctrine by the—now retiring—secretary-general, stated: "He who wishes to think anew has no place in our party."

It is this association of extreme flexibility in practical politics—in the name of "Saving the Republic"—with extreme rigidity in doctrine—in the name of "loyalty to Socialism"—that dis-

tinguishes Guy Mollet from great Socialist leaders of the past, such as Jean Jaurès or Léon Blum. He is, however, no dictator, but a man of the party machine; and he is supported above all by the northern federation of the party. He has had continually to cope with sectional struggles and rivalries of all sorts, and in the process has driven many of its best minds, such as André Philip, into the Left-wing Socialist *PSU*; these men are thus, in practice, lost to politics, because the only part so far played in them by these splinter groups has been to diminish the total representation of the Left by putting forward their own minority candidates.

So the crisis of the Socialists can certainly not be explained away by the limitations of a single individual who—unlike a de Gaulle or a Mendès-France—has no "untypical" characteristics. Before the first vote in the presidential election, Mauroy (Mollet's designated successor), hastened to announce that, though the Socialists would vote for Alain Poher, they would in no circumstances help him to form a government. Thus the French electorate was informed that, while the party desired to destroy a political order, it had no intention of substituting another one for it. So the spirit of Guy Mollet, if it can be called that, survives his power in the political machine.

In July, Pierre Mauroy was not elected as successor of Guy Mollet as everybody had expected. Instead Alain Savary was chosen, a man of great integrity who in his twenties had been the Gaullist governor of St. Pierre et Miquelon (at the time when these islands were at the centre of a tension between de Gaulle and the U.S.A.). He had resigned over North African policies from Guy Mollet's government and later from his party. Savary was elected by 31 against 29 votes, a precarious victory due—it was said—to the support of Mollet himself. The time is apparently not yet ripe for the Socialist Party to start regaining lost prestige.

THE OTHER AND QUITE DIFFERENT problem of the Left is the only slightly diminished strength of the Communist Party which—unlike the Italian comrades—recently demonstrated its unswerving loyalty to the Soviet Union and put forward a very successful candidate for the Presidency of the Republic in the person of the experienced parliamentarian and veteran Stalinist Jacques Duclos, who secured twice as many votes as the public opinion polls expected and more than twice as many as the three other candidates combined (Rocard of the *PSU*; Krivine, the May revolutionary; and the

Socialist Defferre, who promised a Mendès-France government if he were elected). The French Communist Party has recovered amazingly quickly from the two great blows of the May revolution, during which it was isolated and attacked from the Left, and the intervention of the Warsaw powers in Czechoslovakia, which again robbed Communism of its "human face." Now it appears to be making headway against the ultra-Leftists among university staff and students.

But the stronger it is, the lonelier it becomes. The hope of the "Left Federation" that François Mitterrand wanted to forge was to become at least as strong as the Communists, and thus to be able to accept them as allies without frightening off electors who fear the Communists and without having to be afraid of them itself.

An alliance of equals still seemed possible in 1967, when combined lists were a feature of the elections and Pompidou's majority shrank to a few votes. Since the events of May, and Prague, and the collapse of the non-Communist Left, there have been no bridges between the Communist "ghetto" and the rest of political France. The more securely the Communists entrench themselves in their trade unions and their red districts, the more their embattled "protest" deprives them of political efficacy.

In spite of that the Communists are, in practice, a reformist party—though this development is still disguised by their rigid internal structure and their link with Moscow. Communist leaders such as Maurice Thorez and François Billoux felt thoroughly at ease in 1945 in the three-party governments under de Gaulle and after de Gaulle. They called for the breaking-off of strikes, sharply condemned Algerian nationalism, and when—in a changed international situation and under the pressure of the war in Indo-China—they were eliminated from the government by the Socialist Paul Ramadier, they went on declaring for months that they remained in principle "a government party." Only under the pressure of the Stalin-Zhdanov line, the transformation of Communist parties into civil war parties, and the struggle against such objectives as the ports through which Germany was to be provided with food supplies did the party withdraw from all spirit of cooperation. This 1944 willingness to share in the government had been something new. In 1936 the Communists refused, to the general surprise, to take office in the Popular Front government, but critically "supported it from outside."

During the past eleven years the social struggle against the bourgeois state, combined as it was with their agreement with de Gaulle's foreign policy, has resulted in the development of a kind of schizophrenia among the Com-

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munists, for they could neither support the Gaullist régime nor want to overthrow it. To them, as part of an international movement, any alternative government, including a Left-wing one, would from the viewpoint of world-politics have been worse.

It was events outside France that caused the Socialists to move further and further away from the alliance that had proved its usefulness in the 1967 elections. The Israel war and events in Czechoslovakia created a gulf between the two parties. True, the Socialists avoided deepening it, but François Mitterand did not propose to have any Communist "shadow Ministers" in his so-called counter-government. Thus it was clear that the electoral alliance could lead to no government alliance.

THE QUESTION REMAINS why a nation with such a great tradition of critical thought has such a narrow-minded and rigidly doctrinaire Communist party of mass influence. Among the vast literature on the subject, the books of Annie Kriegel are particularly recommended to those who read French.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the causes may be, the special strength of the Communists is a component of the general weakness of the Left. The party of revolution has in practice merely consolidated the notorious *immobilisme* of French politics.

So far as political geography is concerned, the Left is much stronger in the less industrialised, "under-developed" parts of France—i.e., in the south—than in the industrial areas of the north. In 1967 it was again in the south that Mitterand's "Federation" was relatively more successful with the peasants and in small country towns than in the more modern, expanding big towns. While the Gaullist party—which has so often changed its name—gradually spread through the whole country and continually grew in strength, the Left has been splitting up and becoming regionalised.

It is of course very natural that protest should be strongest where a sense of backwardness and neglect prevails—but that has only made the Left the defender of the small man rather than an instrument of progress. For innumerable Frenchmen *le progrès* often has brutal and inhuman aspects, while a defence of *les petits* has social and human value. But it is inadequate as a political ideal. Guy Mollet once protested against a law for the rationalisation of retail

trade: "We cannot ask this of our traders," he said. Defence of the immediate interests of the small man has not sufficed. It was no accident that the great success of 1956 was accompanied by a wave that brought into parliament many Right-wing Poujadists hostile to the State. The manner in which the Communists identify themselves with all the demands (including demagogic ones) of the various interest groups has often been described as a "*Poujadisme du Gauche*."

THE IDEAS that have been of moment in post-war France are associated with the names of Jean Monnet for planning, Robert Schumann for the overcoming of nationalism, de Gaulle for decolonisation, and not with any of the names of the men of the Left to whom the field lay open in 1945 but were lacking in dreams, visions, and reforming spirit. The way from that zenith of power to the time when Jean Daniel (the chief editor of the Left-wing weekly *Nouvel Observateur*) confessed that "to-day it is an act of heroism to belong to the Left" has on the whole been one of gradual decline, interrupted by isolated episodes of recovery and hope. Every event from the colonial wars to the May revolution has been felt by the Left to be, not an opportunity, but a disturbance of a revival in progress.

Not long ago I had a talk with a well-known intellectual of the extreme Left, Claude Bourdet, who complained that "de Gaulle's retirement came too soon—the Left was not yet ready..." The truth of the matter was that part of the bourgeoisie dared vote against de Gaulle because the revolutionary danger from the Left had grown so remote. If history had always waited until *la gauche est prête*, immobilism would have been total. All impulses to movement, to the solution of crises, came from outside—with one great exception, that of Pierre Mendès-France. Between June 1954 and February 1955 he cut a number of Gordian knots—Viet Nam and Tunisia—and was overthrown by men of his own Radical Socialist party just when he was about to tackle economic and social problems. For all his defects, he was undoubtedly the only reformer who roused political interest and inspired trust among the young. He quickly resigned from Guy Mollet's 1956 government, and one can understand why. But a good deal of his reforming spirit lives on; his leading economic adviser Simon Nora has been given a similar post in Chaban Delmas' government (Chaban Delmas was himself a member of the Mendès-France cabinet), and Nora's report on the state of the public services and state indus-

<sup>1</sup> Annie Kriegel has written a two-volume work: *Aux origines du communisme français* (Mouton & Co., the Hague) and, among several other books, a study of the French Communist Party for *Editions du Seuil*.

tries, which was long kept secret, may yet be a point of departure for important necessary reforms.

The two significant trends in France have been called *Mendèsisme* and *Gaullisme*, i.e., have been named after individuals, a phenomenon for which there is no parallel in other Western democracies. That is an indication of the special difficulties put in the way of new ideas and actions by the embattled self-sufficiency of the party machines. They have to come from outside, as a result of the initiative of individuals. The responsibility for every attempt to break through the two strangely mingled traditions of war between political creeds and combinations of interests has been taken, not by

political parties, but by "lonely individuals." It is possible that now, after the twilight of the gods, in the more normal era of "Pompidolism," a new phase may be beginning in which France will grow more similar to the other democracies.

And the parties of the Left? The Communists are reformist-minded, but do not dare to be reformist in practice. The Socialists practise reformist policies, but do not dare to adopt reformism as part of their doctrine. Thus the spirit of practical reform in French society seeks other and sometimes unusual and unexpected outlets. At all events, if reaching a zero point is ever a blessing, the French Left is now enjoying a state of grace indeed.

François Bondy

## The Dangers of Finding Something Out

*A Comment on Kathleen Nott — By LIONEL TIGER*

OF COURSE Kathleen Nott ["The Unnatural History of Human Aggression," *ENCOUNTER*, November] is correct in questioning the validity and meaning of the current vogueish enterprise of explaining human behaviour in terms of other animals. Our intense interest in this strangely adventurous process may as much betray a fear for our human future as it reflects the new competence and insights of ethologists and their colleagues. It is sensible to ask if our eagerness to understand the possible underlying regularities in behaviour makes us insensitive to the very complexity and richness of human experience—a density to which we must remain attuned if we really are to understand ourselves. And because aggression is seen now as part of a major moral (to say nothing of survival) crisis it was to be expected that a willing corps of writers would satisfy the market's need for perseverating chat and essays, such as hers.

But it is not a joke, it is not idle, it is not even premature to try to take the analytical steps which Miss Nott and others query. I want to discuss some features of the explanatory structure we use to understand behaviour, and to argue that the approach of ethologists—if not ethology itself—must become part of the repertoire of any serious student of human behaviour. There need be no conflict between ethology and the more traditional forms of social inquiry; we

are all concerned with systems of behaviour and with what various organisms do and what cultures are. But while ethologists brood on the whole animal, most social scientists and nearly all humanists begin with a conceptual handicap which makes it both difficult and presumptuous to encounter the whole man.

At the simply academic level, an abiding curiosity of university organisation is that the Social sciences are distinguished from the Natural. In addition to vaguely supporting the neo-Rousseauist lament that society is somehow unnatural, an important result of this practical division of labour—of office space, student programmes, research procedures, and so on—has been the training of biologically ignorant social scientists. For example: a recurrent stimulus of endless and passionate contention in most Sociology departments is the question: How much mathematics should students learn? Countless hours are devoted to the search for the acceptable and elusive answer. In many departments post-graduates and even undergraduates are required to undertake high-level mathematics. Elaborate cognate attention is given—and quite rightly—to the problem of training methodologically skilled persons who can be reasonably trustworthy as students of behaviour. Yet the number of influential departments who demand any sophisticated biology from their students can probably be counted on the fingers of one

octopus. In other words, it is deemed much more important to learn *how* to deal with data than to learn *what* data students of other animals collect, and why and what the data mean in terms of the animal's place in the order of nature. Consequently, sociologists and their fellow social scientists—with the exception of some anthropologists—seldom boast legitimate and handy ways of assimilating the work of the biological sciences into their own models and explanations.

Historically, one reason for sociology's success lay in its rejection of the (not very good) biological data and analogies which the Social Darwinists embraced. But since that shabby time there has been genuine and appreciable improvement in biological understanding. Nevertheless sociologists have been predictably slow in incorporating the pertinent aspects of this into their work; thus they deprive themselves of the benefits of good work; and they deprive others of their irreplaceable professional contribution to the study of living systems.

MISS NOTT, AT LEAST, is willing to discuss the matter. One reputable anthropologist I know simply refused to review Robert Ardrey's *The Territorial Imperative*. The very mention of Ardrey's name is often enough to conclude swiftly a conversation between two social scientists whose views differ on the subject of human animality or even animal humanity. As Ardrey himself notes:

Having... been science's witness for many years, I am convinced that we shall witness in the near future a resumption of those passionate controversies... which followed the publication of *Origin of Species*... In the nineteenth century, science as a whole spoke for the continuity of living beings whereas religion spoke for the uniqueness of man. In our time the controversy must arise between the wings of science itself.

Sixty years ago some serious people doubted that physical continuity existed between humans and other primates. In principle, contemporary doubts about behavioural continuity may look as curious and narrow-minded to our successors.

THE UNIT of social behaviour is the individual organism. It is clearly useful to continue formulating descriptions and theories about the behaviour of the group in which this unit acts. But it is simply efficient science to continue thinking as hard as possible about the nature of the individual. We know that DNA controls our physical development in good

measure; the molecule itself changes shape as we pass through the life cycle. We know, too, that it is inconsistent to divorce physical structure—the body—from its function—the behaviour. The question is: How is behaviour governed by DNA? How are we to find out? American sociologists in particular have tended to assume we cannot find out, or at least sociologists can't, and that in absence of better data we must more or less ignore the findings of biology. For example in *Political Man* (1963), S. M. Lipset writes:

It seems logical that men will arrange their impressions of the environment so as to maximize their sense of superiority over others.

On one level this is a reasonable enough assumption about a central interaction of politics. But at a more serious stage of analysis—the *Why?* stage—it is quite inadequate. Man is a terrestrial primate; for some other such animals the drive for dominance is an abiding passion of the males and an essential and predictable feature of the reproductive system. Politics is not just about who gets which post in which situation. It is a systematic link with the massive processes of which Darwin wrote and (after the Social Darwinists wove their fantasies) the study of which was righteously let fall or pushed into desuetude.

This is not to say that social scientists lack a model of man based on biology, even if it is bad biology. Learning Theory has prevailed for a long time and it merged neatly with an underlying positivist view that virtually all phenomena can be fixed, improved, or at least controlled. Family lore, educational patterns, and even moral systems have emerged from notions about relative free will and the almost absolute effectiveness of culture in solving problems. But, as enough commentators have already made clear this whole edifice was surprisingly dependent upon rats running mazes, sophomores incanting nonsense syllables, and other forms of closely controlled nicely mathematical experimental routines. Only now are the serious linguists beginning to come to terms with the biological foundations of language and how it's learned by children in actual social situations. And the rats? Amid all the apparatus, graphs, time clocks, pellet dispensers, and hypotheses a simple critical fact went long unnoticed. Rats are nocturnal animals. As the ethologist M. R. A. Chance has noted, countless experiments which still underpin a whole theory about the motivation and cumulation of learning and experience were performed on poor little sleepy creatures whose evolution the experimenters were insufficiently sensitive to consider. As Miss Jean Harlow

reiterates in *The Beard*: "If you want to pry any secrets from me, you must first find the real me. Which one will you pursue?"

OF COURSE THERE HAVE BEEN important recent changes. There is less reliance on explanations which depend on a narrow bias toward the nurture side of the nature-nurture (false) dichotomy. There is greater sense of the importance of synthetic explanations which account for both social and biological inputs into behavioural systems. Increasingly, it becomes recognised that social action in gregarious animals is the quintessential expression of biological reality. But nonetheless the gap remains between the social and natural sciences. I am afraid Miss Nott underestimates the perplexing resistance to biological work among social scientists, the seriousness and impact of this resistance, and the structural rejection of biological data as having any effect on sociological theories (For example, even in as elegant and searching a study as Percy Cohen's recent *Modern Social Theory* we are told: "as far as we know men do not have genetically inherited social instincts; but they do have culture and the ability not only to be influenced by it but to create it...")

In her review she deals at length with aggression. We are all familiar with the Hawk-Dove argument about aggression. The Doves coo that we are miserable to each other because we are frustrated and unhappy. When the objective conditions of frustration are removed we will all live amiably ever after—or until there are new objective conditions of frustration, etc., etc. With perhaps unseemly triumph, on the other hand, the Hawks rasp out the news that the source of evil is in us; even out of uniform—even naked—we are all killer apes. The human war record (and this unsettles Miss Nott as it does most people) and the facts of human violence and aggression are so grisly, unyielding, and recurrent that the Darwinian unflattering light on man betrays his true colours.

But surely the argument is misstated and can be resolved. Aggression is not simply the equivalent in behaviour of an organ's secretion. It is a very complex *social* response intimately bound to the maintenance of cooperative social links. Konrad Lorenz's notion that those animals who *bond* with each other also *aggress* suggests the outline of the theory. An important development of this in human terms—to which, like other writers Lorenz gives scant attention—is that *the bonds are always male bonds*. Aggression is not a human problem but a male problem.

This is very significant. Maleness and femaleness are indisputably biological categories. Dealing with them as units of analysis may help us

learn more about the actual relevance of biological inputs for social systems.

LET ME PUT AN ANALOGY. Your average post-adolescent presenile male and female left to their own devices will respond to one another in fairly predictable ways. Though cultural factors will severely affect the niceties, timing, and focus of the encounter, a biologically-based valence or attraction exists which frequently leads to sexual intercourse or the wish or need for it. This is broadly determined by the biological nature of human beings. But courtship, seduction, love-making, and the permission of intimacy are also social responses. Very complex social patterns, then, can be basically "programmed." Of course there is great variety in the forms of expression of the programme. But that it appears anew so predictably and tenaciously in each life cycle and each community underlines the effect of biological infra-structure on even the most potentially delicate and personal of matters.

So much for the melodious high-frequency sounds of nature. What about the heavy bass unpleasantness of aggression and violence? Here is a proposition. Just as there is a valence between males and females, my suggestion is that there is also a valence between males. In the

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way that males and females make love, males and males make war. Not, of course, necessarily war; but the male-male interaction will yield some form of aggression against the environment, against other people, or against animals. It is the social response of men in groups which is the infra-structure of aggression activity.

This activity need not be destructive. It can be a football game, a research project, designing and marketing a product, running a government, or working pit-stops in car races. Leaving aside the role of females in all this for a moment, let it just be said that the social relationship between adult males is as important for the achievement of communal ends and insurance of protection as the Male-Female and Mother-Young bonds are for reproduction. What I am doing here is replacing "male" for "person" in describing various activities and institutions. Instead of saying the controlling groups of governments are composed of people, we can see that they are formed overwhelmingly of males—despite years of effort, education, and pious hopes to the contrary. Armies are male, the police brutals are too. So are the important juvenile gangs, secret societies, boards of directors, ball teams, and kitchens of gourmet restaurants—so are, in fact the vast majority of groups involving the use of force and sanction, and those making important state decisions. For a variety of strange reasons we have grown unaccustomed to looking at sexual (non-erotic) factors in social organisations and hence we overlook the importance of maleness and femaleness in these groups.

Thus the control of aggression in its various forms—violence is only one possible result of the aggressive outward-going pattern—amounts to dealing with specifically male interactions. The reason may be that there is a *positive valence between males* which may be a species-specific pattern, and which may be intrinsic to the whole problem of aggression.

A NUMBER of arguments support this proposition; I have set them out elsewhere in detail.<sup>1</sup> Briefly, here, there is some relevant analogous primatological material, particularly in terms of politics and defence. Physical and physiological differences between human males and females reflect various evolutionary factors. Yet even these differences are less important than the specialisation in the behaviour of males and females. In other primates all adults collect their own food—a major difference from our pattern.

<sup>1</sup> See my *Men in Groups* (Nelson, London; Random House, New York 1969).

In humans there is a consistent division of labour. Every society has such a division; the tasks involved may differ but the male-female barrier does not. Such a cross-cultural fact in the context of the other pertinent materials suggests that sexually-exclusive groups do not form at random, but that there is a "genetically programmed behavioural disposition" to do so. We have a hunting past; we have been hunters at least 99 per cent of our history as a species; the most recent suggestion is that we have been hunting for up to twenty million years and are, thus, inextricably bound up with this hunting pattern and the inevitable fact that males hunted and females did not. If we assume that pre-history is just "deep history" with a genetic effect, then male exclusiveness becomes a powerful matter indeed. Those who wish to eliminate or attenuate this exclusiveness must therefore consider that it may not result from simple ancient prejudice or be remediable by better Social Studies education. It may be the nature of the beast.

Miss Nott wonders if Dr. Storr and Mr. Ardrey fully appreciate what they are saying when they suggest how important are sexual differences and asks if they realise that they may be promoting a form of permanent two-caste structure. This is a major question. But the answer to it (at least in the diagnostic stage) has little to do with ideological hopes and much to do with looking Man in the eye without looking away. Possibly one of the fears that greets human ethology is that *we might find something out*. We might actually come to know that, for example, uninterrupted maternal care is better (or not better) for children and that mothers of young children should not work, or that adultery is necessary (or unnecessary) for happy marriage. Or that women should or should not be Cabinet Ministers. We may well discover that the Pill has effects on the healthy relationships between males and females and on the overall pattern of women's behaviour which are considerably more worrisome than the relatively simple medical difficulties diagnosed so far. If we did find something out, the liberal response would be to feel that something should be done about it. And if we do find that women can only have top jobs with great difficulty, or that male dominance is a species-specific pattern? Do we begin from that new finding, or from old egalitarian theory? What will the ideologues do should it be found that a particular plan or reform must defy "the nature of the beast"?

John Bleibtreu, one of the authors Miss Nott discusses, predicts that biology will be the queen of the sciences in the future—a large boast, but perhaps not a wholly idle one. Part of the cur-

rent interest in biology must derive from the weariness many intellectual consumers feel about the various ideologies and values underlying theory-based analysis of social behaviour. Conceivably biology may be the queen of sciences because it may permit finally a fully secular scientific approach to human experience and society. We have been scientific about things, planets, and missiles—but much less so about people. Perhaps many biologists become biologists because they dislike people and prefer the marshes, the savannah, the insulated lab, the teasing glimpse of a chimp troupe on the move. And many biologists remain obstinately uninformed about human behaviour. But some of the best are beginning to inform themselves, and their initial disengagement from conventional notions about behaviour may permit them to begin formulating useful notions of what humans do and why. Of course this does not mean we will do without all the other more devious analysts such as poets, shoe designers, vintners, and salesmen. But suddenly everything is too cramped, too shamelessly intimate, for the distortions of ideology, fashions, and wholesale culture *Gestalten* to deny us a look into other people's eyes, and behind their eyes.

THE ETHOLOGICAL TRICK, like the sociological one, is to see social events in systems. People live in systems. Though they vary on the normal curve, human brains and hence much of human consciousness are similar everywhere. Some idea of the systematic interaction of all these similarly conscious organisms could presage a new kind of medievalism where the notion of community once again encompasses the whole species. With our common stereoscopic vision we see somewhat the same things; and because of our hardness as a species we can in fact cross many boundaries of geography and culture, and we do. Miss Nott is hasty to fuss about the possibly pretentious and magisterial assertions of the writers she reviews. We pollute our environment; we enslave our fellow citizens; we kill our enemies; and we create more enemies. It has come to that undignified and inelegantly domestic point that we can no longer do all, or even some, of these things. We must know ourselves as a species. If we don't, perhaps we are just "waiting for the end." If we do, then we can try to grow systematic symbiosis and then a few intriguing flowers in the primordial mud. We can predict our behaviour in response to germs, and can cooperate in preventing the spread of epidemics and disease. When and if we know usefully more about our responses in society perhaps we can make similar agreements for reasons of mutual advantage. If we would know more, we might know better.

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# BOOKS & WRITERS

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## Yeats and Nietzsche

*Reflections on a Poet's Marginal Notes — By ERICH HELLER*

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS came into contact with Nietzsche's thought in the summer of 1902. It was only two years after the philosopher's death, but fourteen years after his mind had died in that catastrophe which is recorded in one of the last pieces of coherent, if mad, prose written by him: a postcard mailed at Turin railway station on the 4th of January 1889 and addressed to his friend Peter Gast. "To my maestro Pietro," it began, and then came the Orphic injunction: "Sing a new song for me: the world is transfigured and all the heavens rejoice." It was signed "The Crucified."

This note carried to the young composer not only that strange exalted commission but also, implicitly, the terrible news of Nietzsche's mental collapse. Brief and mad though it is, it is all but a résumé of his early masterpiece *The Birth of Tragedy*, a work which so intriguingly blends the learning and intuition of the classical philologist with the dithyrambic confession of a soul singularly initiated, as he believed, into the secret of beauty: that it emerges from pain and suffering, that Apollo's command of surpassingly beautiful forms derives its power from the frenzy of Dionysus' dismemberment. Thinking of Greek tragedy and Greek art, Nietzsche was inspired by Schopenhauer's metaphysical pessimism and aesthetic exultancy as well as by the Romantic trinity of love, death, and music upon which Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* is founded. Treating in so Romantic a manner even so Classical a subject, he pronounced with the utmost lucidity the central dogma of the new philosophy of art: "Only as an aesthetic phenomenon is the world for ever justified." How unimaginably must those Greeks have been wounded by life, Nietzsche exclaimed, to redeem its horrors

in such epiphany of the Beautiful! Nietzsche, this Christian of the aesthetic passion, believed—as early as *The Birth of Tragedy* of 1871-72, and not only when he sent that insane message to his composer friend—that it was the crucified spirit which in its agony acquired the power to transfigure the world through beauty so that all the heavens rejoiced. "Sing a new song for me..."

There is no other poet of the 20th century who sang so greatly even of his agonies as did Yeats:

*An aged man is but a paltry thing,  
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless  
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing  
For every tatter in its mortal dress....*

And further:

*Once out of nature I shall never take  
My bodily form from any natural thing,  
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make  
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling  
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;  
Or set upon a golden bough to sing  
To lords and ladies of Byzantium  
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.*

Were it not so obvious, it would be tempting to use this song of the Irish sailor to Byzantium for laying bare the roots that Yeats' sensibility had in Nietzsche's aesthetic philosophy—and not because he had learned it in the manner of a student's assignment in the philosophy of art, but because Nietzsche's mind burrowed in the same soil from which Yeats' imagination grew. This is how Nietzsche—like William Blake—was destined to become one of the "singing masters" of the poet's soul, that soul which, "fastened to a dying animal," desired to be gathered "into the artifice of eternity"—desired (in Nietzsche's words) to attain to that redeeming vision of world and existence in which world and existence are for ever justified: namely, as something "out of nature" and "beyond the dying animal," as an "aesthetic phenomenon" or an "artifice of eternity."

ERICH HELLER is the author of "The Disinherited Mind" (Bowes, 1959) and a study of Thomas Mann entitled "The Ironic German" (Secker, 1958).

OF COURSE, SUCH WISDOM and such desire entail, just as the Christian vision and desire for eternity once did, the distress the spirit suffers in the *world as it is*, that is, the world before the arrival of the saving grace; or (in the 19th and 20th centuries) the aesthetic metamorphosis. Yeats' "artifice of eternity" and Nietzsche's "aesthetic phenomenon" are, in all their apparent artificiality and "aestheticism," blood relations of the Apocalypse. They spring from the same source as the ancient belief that the world is doomed unless it be transfigured in a final act of salvation. Neither the meaning of Nietzsche's "aesthetic phenomenon" nor of his supremely "aesthetic" *Übermensch* is comprehensible without the story which (as he once said) his philosophy tells, namely "the history of the next two centuries":

For a long time now our whole civilisation has been driving, with a tortured intensity that increases from decade to decade, as if towards a catastrophe: restlessly, violently, tempestuously, like a mighty river craving the end of its journey without pausing to reflect, indeed fearful of reflection. Where we live, soon nobody will be able to exist.

Or elsewhere:

I foresee something terrible. Chaos everywhere; nothing left which is of any value; nothing which commands: Thou shalt!

And just as Nietzsche's aesthetic philosophy eludes our grasp if we do not see it as the aesthetic refuge from his apocalyptic diagnosis of our "reality," so Yeats' aesthetic "Byzantinism" cannot be fathomed to the true depth of its impulse if we do not relate its apotheosis of art to the apocalypse of his poem "The Second Coming." For it is indeed Nietzsche's prophecy of "what is to come" that in this poem assumes the form of grand verse:

*Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.*

I apologise for quoting these lines of Yeats, worn as they are by constant use—but my point cannot be made without them. For it is my contention that the religion of Art, the deification of the "artifice of eternity" or the "aesthetic phenomenon," which for so many great and good minds of the last hundred years has taken the place once held by a different gospel of salvation, is supported—as, at its origin, the Christian religion was—by the sense of a condemned "real word." This is certainly true of

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such *religiosi* of Art as Baudelaire, Rimbaud, and Mallarmé; of Nietzsche, Rilke, and Stefan George; and it is true of the Yeats of "The Second Coming":

*The darkness drops again; but now I know  
That twenty centuries of stony sleep  
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,  
And what rough beast, its hour come round at  
last,  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?*

Although such rhetorical questions do not require any answers, this one was answered by Nietzsche long before Yeats asked it. The beast to be born was the Anti-Christ; and this is what, when he was already close to insanity, Nietzsche called himself. He did so at about the time he wrote, "We have *Art* in order not to perish of *Truth*."

IN THE SUMMER of 1902 Yeats discovered Nietzsche, very likely through a little volume ambitiously entitled *Nietzsche as Critic, Philosopher, Poet and Prophet*, described more modestly in the sub-title as "Choice Selections from his Works" (compiled by a man who most humbly and, considering the aristocratic doctrines the anthology contains, somewhat inappropriately was called Thomas Common). The book was published in 1901 in London, and it is now (such are the vagaries of our travelsome scholarship) kept under lock and key in the Deering Library of Northwestern University. The poet read the book with an active and capricious pencil in his hand. He heavily underlined sentences, scribbled queries, arguments, and even little discourses in the margins, and thus, very differently from what in the assessment of librarians the scribbblings of lesser readers would do to a book, considerably raised its value, indeed elevated it to the rank of a Very Rare Book.

A comparison between Nietzsche's text and Yeats' marginal entries may supply the student with many insights into the troublesome problem of "influence," that is, the effect one creative mind has upon another. T. S. Eliot, in a celebrated essay, compared the mind of the poet to a catalyst, an "impersonal" chemical presence that, perhaps a little in the manner of the philosopher Don Alfonso in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, contrives the union of elements, hitherto otherwise engaged, and then discreetly withdraws from the newly compounded and sometimes confounded scene. (There is indeed no trace of Don Alfonso's agency discernible in the music that wittily and sublimely voices the fresh and faithless enchantments drawing the exchanged lovers towards one another.) Whether the poetic mind acts on all occasions like Don Alfonso, the philosophical catalyst, is doubtful. In our

instance it is certainly not the mind of the poet but rather the mind of the *thinker* that tends to vanish as soon as Yeats becomes entangled, in the margin, with Nietzsche's ideas. There are, for instance, in Thomas Common's anthology a number of passages from Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*; they denounce the "Christian infamy" of promising the virtuously weak and meek, deprived of all pleasures here and now, the compensations of an afterlife when they will be privileged to watch the hellish torments of those who were strong and wicked on earth. Dante—so we read in Nietzsche's text—committed a spiritual *faux pas* of the first order when he put above the gates of Hell the inscription, "I too have been created by Love Eternal." For if we accept the opinion of Dante's theological teacher, St. Thomas Aquinas, the Love Eternal that made Hell made it for the purpose of perversely rewarding its darlings. Thomas, "the great teacher and saint," we read in Nietzsche's text that lay open before Yeats, promised, "with the gentleness of a lamb," that "the Blessed in Heaven will see how the Damned are punished, and thus will enjoy their own beatitude even more." And Nietzsche reflects that, whatever might be a suitable text for the gates of Hell, at the entrance door of a Paradise with such a profitable view of the tormented could be inscribed with greater justice: "I too have been created by Eternal Hatred."

ONE MIGHT EXPECT that this would have been of some interest to Yeats, the Irish renegade Protestant with (as he put it) "a wicked theology" of his own, who at about that time had his first meeting with the ill-mannered James Joyce and mistakenly tried to ascribe the young man's intellectual arrogance to his Thomist indoctrination:

He is from the Royal [the Catholic Dublin] University, I thought, and he thinks that everything has been settled by Thomas Aquinas, so we need not trouble about it.

But all that Yeats says in the margin of Nietzsche's anti-Christian and anti-Thomist diatribe is:

Does Christianity create commerce by teaching men to live not in the continual present of self-revelation but to deny self and present for future gain, first heaven and then wealth?

It sounds as if it had been written by the Fabian R. H. Tawney after a first reading of Max Weber and in preparation of his book on *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*. Strange, very strange. But even stranger is the question that Yeats asks immediately afterwards:

But why does Nietzsche think that the night has no stars, nothing but bats and owls and the insane moon?

Now, Nietzsche does not think anything of the sort, and besides, nowhere near this Yeatsian query does Nietzsche's text mention any such nocturnal apparitions. Yet while these are entirely foreign to the text on which they appear questioningly to comment, they are germane to some poems Yeats wrote at the time:

*Because of something told under the famished horn*

*Of the hunter's moon, that hung between the night and the day...*

Or, most strikingly, this:

*I cried when the moon was murmuring to the birds:*

*"Let peewit call and curlew cry where they will, I long for your merry and tender and pitiful words,*

*For the roads are unending, and there is no place to my mind".*

Whatever may be the intellectual, translatable sane meaning of that insane moon (perhaps the moon of the *Vision* in her "famished horn" phase?) or those marginal bats and owls (perhaps poetry's second cousins to the peewits and curlews?), only a mind, kept very busy by its

own poetic affairs, would read another writer's writing with such imaginative impatience. Or to put the matter more frivolously: He who has bees in his bonnet reads not so much for the love of what he reads as for the honey to be made from it; and not since Blake has there been, in the history of great English poetry, a bonnet like Yeats', buzzing with so many agile bees.

Clearly, we have to guard against misinterpreting the nature of the "influence" Nietzsche had upon Yeats, indeed the kind of intellectual reception one creative spirit can possibly give to another. True, the examples shown constitute an extreme case of what in university syllabuses is called "independent reading"; at other times Yeats has dealt less extravagantly with Nietzsche's possessions. Yet when mind comes to mind, what happens is never like the printing of words upon an empty sheet. It is more—to keep within Yeats' symbols—like Jupiter visiting Leda; and this visitation, surely, did not result in the lady's becoming more "jovial"; nor "did she put on his knowledge with his power"; no, she became pregnant with her own mythology.

In 1902, then, Yeats read Nietzsche for the first time, and probably more of him than is collected in Thomas Common's *Choice Selec-*

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tions. For the "strong enchanter" (as Yeats called Nietzsche in a letter he wrote in August 1902 to Lady Gregory) made him neglect his friends, worsened his eyesight by making him read to excess, and filled him with a "curious astringent joy," three words that could be lifted from the letter and put down again in a line of exquisite Yeatsian poetry. About twenty years later Yeats published *A Vision*, a book that not only owes something to Nietzsche's vision of both the Eternal Recurrence and the *Übermensch* but also elevates Nietzsche to the highest office ever assigned to him in the varied history of his reputation:

... Eleven pass, and then  
Athena takes Achilles by the hair,  
Hector is in the dust, Nietzsche is born,  
Because the hero's crescent is the twelfth.

Not even in his most euphoric moments would Nietzsche have dreamt of such a career: from Thomas Common's *Choice Selections* to this most uncommon succession. It needed Ireland, it needed Yeats, the last great poet who—after Blake, after Holderlin—dared aspire to a systematic mythology (and this mythological ambition is inseparable from the particular quality of his poetic greatness)—it needed Yeats so dramatically to make good the neglect Nietzsche had suffered in his lifetime.

LIKE MUCH IN Nietzsche's writings, Yeats' *Vision* ought to embarrass us, aesthetic educators that we claim to be, much more painfully than it appears to have done. It should compel us to ponder more seriously the question it raises—not by what it says but by what it is: a disturbing mixture of obsessive mythologising, pseudo-cosmological meticulousness, acute critical observations, and most outlandish beliefs. At least one of the questions that it thus invites is of the greatest urgency—and it is a question also suggested again and again by the reading of Nietzsche. It concerns the eccentricity of thought, the strains of the fancy, the self-conscious mysticism, and even the monstrosities of political ideas that, with disquieting regularity, came to the fore when sallies into "life" were made by the life-starved inhabitants of the ivory towers. Nasty creatures lay in wait where the philosophy of French symbolism (a philosophy that was an essential part of Yeats' inheritance) met with German or even Italian appetites for political realities that were to be charged with the same wild, quivering, ruthless, "terrible" beauty a perfect Symbolist poem possessed; where the extreme withdrawal from "life" reached at the end of its circular journey the border of the "real"

world again, determined now to invade it with barbaric ecstasies, knights in shining armour, and flags flying in the wind like so many birds of paradise; and where even Yeats, using Nietzsche's Dionysian and Apollonian vocabulary, confessed (as he did in a letter to Russell, 14 May 1903) that the time for pursuing through poetry "some kind of disembodied beauty" had passed: "I feel about me and in me," he wrote, "an impulse to... carry the realisation of beauty as far as possible." Consciously, he may have meant only his desire "to create form" through poetry of a more Apollonian kind than ever before. But the very words "to carry the realisation of beauty as far as possible" do point in the direction of the poet D'Annunzio's march on Fiume, or put one in mind of the disturbing ambiguities of Stefan George's poem "The Burning of the Temple," not to mention Yeats' own flirtations with the Blue Shirts of Dublin.

It was all very well for that sophisticated cold-and-hot-gospeller of unbridled aestheticism, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, whose *Axel* Yeats once called his "sacred book," to say that nothing counted in life but the cultivation and contemplation of beauty: "As for living, our servants will do that for us..." Yeats was fond of quoting this (and quoted it even in one of those stories that, very oddly, preface his *Vision*.) Of course, Axel's witticism is nothing if not Nietzsche's doctrine from *The Birth of Tragedy* (note well: of tragedy!): "Only as an aesthetic phenomenon are world and existence for ever justified," or "The purpose of life is... the pure aesthetic delight." It is nothing if not Nietzsche transposed into the lighter idiom of the play. "As for living, our servants will do that for us"—yet there came a time (the First World War was its beginning) when the servants did the living and, for that matter, the dying with such violent intensity that it seemed to acquire a perverse beauty of its own in the eyes of some pure aesthetic beholders, so much so that the swans and herons and albatrosses and flamingos and peacocks and all the rest of the aristocratic Symbolist poultry had to give way to more "real" raw material of the creative imagination: destroy the cities of man so that, perhaps, they might be rebuilt after the images of pure aesthetic delight.

One day *this* history of aestheticism will have to be written. It might rake its cue from Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, the story of the artist who (like his forerunner, Gustav Aschenbach in *Death in Venice*) came to know the swampy, sultry estuaries in which the cold, pearly, translucent streams of the land wholly dedicated to Art may reach their destination. Or it might use as its point of departure Yeats

himself who, in the *Autobiography*, concludes the chapter on "The Tragic Generation" in a manner more Nietzschean than he himself is likely to have known: "After Stéphane Mallarmé, after Paul Verlaine, after Gustave Moreau, after Puvis de Chavannes, after our own verse, after all our subtle colour and nervous rhythm, after the faint mixed tints of Conder, what more is possible? After us the Savage God":

*And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?*

Nietzsche had diagnosed such pregnancy in the aesthetic absolutism of earlier artists: Baudelaire and Flaubert. He indeed was acquainted with the Furies of annihilation into which the Muses of aestheticism might one day transform themselves. Beauty into Beast—this is, if not *the* last scene, undoubtedly one of the final scenes in the drama of aestheticism, a scene evoked once again in Yeats' late poem "Meru" (which is Nietzschean in a more thorough sense than the first obviousness reveals):

*Civilisation is hooped together, brought  
Under a rule, under the semblance of peace  
By manifold illusion; but man's life is thought,  
And he, despite his terror, cannot cease  
Ravelling, raging, and uprooting that he may  
come  
Into the desolation of reality:  
Egypt and Greece, good-bye, and good-bye, Rome!*

THIS IS NOT THE OCCASION for an exercise in "close reading." Yet the terrible meaning of "Meru" ought not to be allowed to escape us, the less so as these lines take us back from 1935 (the time when they were written) to 1902, the time of Yeats' first reading of Nietzsche. "But man's life is thought"—that is, the uniquely human faculty which in Yeats' much earlier poem "Michael Robartes and the Dancer" (1921) had assumed the funny shape of a half-dead dragon, at least in so far as it was a beautiful lady who did the thinking and thus puritanically interfered with her suitor's desire:

*Opinion is not worth a rush;  
In this altar-piece the knight  
Who grips his long spear so to push  
That dragon through the fading light,  
Loved the lady; and it's plain  
The half-dead dragon was her thought,  
That every morning rose again  
And dug its claws and shrieked and fought.  
Could the impossible come to pass  
She would have time to turn her eyes,  
Her lover thought, upon the glass  
And on the instant would grow wise.*

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**BODLEY HEAD**

In other words—even Yeats' other words—she should forgo thinking and submit instead to "the heroic discipline of the looking-glass." Critics of Yeats have acquired the habit of calling this poem "witty and charming." Yes, it is quite witty, but it is not charming. As it progresses, it becomes blasphemous and abysmal. There is, perhaps, not much to be said against either blasphemies or abysses; yet whatever adjectives we may choose for abysses, "charming" is the wrong one. Now, if this witty poem presents "Thought" in the guise of a grotesque thing, a half-dead dragon, in the much later poem "Meru" the dragon has become truly formidable. "Thought," in "Michael Robartes and the Dancer," was just powerful enough to make women ignore the wisdom of the mirror, obstruct the natural intelligence and "uncomposite blessedness" of their beautiful bodies, frustrate their lovers, and grow perplexed at the amorously and blasphemously theological question:

*Did God in portioning wine and bread  
Give man His thought or His mere body?—*

In "Meru," however, "thought" has consequences still weightier than the erotic disappointment of the ardent knight. It causes man to rave and rage and desolate his reality. Why? The question is important, and the answer given within the poem "Meru" itself is: because thought makes man recognise as sham a civilisation hooped together by manifold illusion; and clearly there can be nothing very objectionable about thought that shows illusions for what they are, namely illusory. In "Michael Robartes and the Dancer," then, "thought" is wrong and erroneous; it prevents the woman from seeing what truly is: the joy (joyous beyond all thoughtful questions and disputes) of erotic abandonment. In "Meru," on the contrary, "thought" is right: it compels man to recognise the essential falsity of his civilised arrangements: these *are*, it is implied, "hooped together by manifold illusion." But in either case, whether it be true or false, "thought" is disastrous. In both cases—once more the old paradox!—it is thought, Yeats' thought, that yields the catastrophic discovery.

THE SAD STORY is a very old one: the Tree of Knowledge does not stand for the good life. Again and again, and with increasing urgency in his later years, Yeats returned to the grand theme. The question, taken up, varied, and variously answered by his poetry, is: Why is it that man seems to have to choose between the perfection of life and that perfection which resides in the works of the mind, a mind trained "in a learned school" with such intensity that

body and blood are condemned to "slow decay" and "dull decrepitude"? Or is there, will there ever be, a "spiritual intellect" capable of that serene profundity which gives to its thought a "dance-like" glory? Or would "life" and "mind" one day be reconciled in that "lasting song," the singing of which is utterly beyond the power of men thinking "in the mind alone," but is sung with splendid ease by him who "thinks in a marrow-bone"? Of course, the theme has not been invented by Yeats, and not by Nietzsche either—although Zarathustra is among prophets the keenest in extolling the marriage between thought and dance, the keenest too in aspiring to that utopian realm of the spirit where

*The body is not bruised to pleasure soul,  
Nor beauty born out of its own despair,  
Nor blear-eyed wisdom out of midnight oil,*

but where, on the contrary, the body is the soul's delight, where all nay-saying is given the lie by the advent of the Beautiful, and where the joyous sage gives of his wisdom in the light of noonday. Yet this may have been before the Birth of Tragedy, before the "harsh reproof," the "trivial event" that changed the "childish day to tragedy," or after the fulfilment of that persistent Romantic hope that longs for the healing of the wound from which man has suffered ever since the Fall. This hope has been voiced by innumerable voices, and with particular poetic emphasis throughout the Romantic age, but by no one, I believe, more poignantly or more enticingly than by Yeats in the eighth stanza of one of his greatest poems, untired yet and surely not to be exhausted by being used and quoted so profusely. For that chestnut-tree and great-rooted blossomer has grown from the richest soil of Romantic poetry. It embodies the Romantic vision of the Tree of Life that has the power to cure the disease man has contracted through so greedily reaching for the Tree of Knowledge:

*O chestnut-tree, great-rooted blossomer,  
Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole?  
O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,  
How can we know the dancer from the dance?*

Alas, out of the delicious light and shade of the great tree, we can know and we do know. Nietzsche has much to tell of dancers who wear their dance like a mask of innocence. And Rilke (another remarkable poet who had read Nietzsche, had a Tower in which to write poetry, an even more aristocratic Lady Gregory to help and encourage him, and in the end even a mythology which, though less astrological and more poetic than Yeats', is not altogether lacking in parallels to his)—Rilke, in the Fourth of the *Duino Elegies*, angrily dismisses his

dancer, the dancer who theatrically dances before the backdrop of "the well-known garden." He dismisses him because he *is* not what he *does*, but is disguised, "a mask half-filled with life," and will be a mediocrity as soon as the performance is over and the make-up removed.

The figure of that dancer came to Rilke from Kleist's essayistic story about the Marionette Theatre, a story in which this most Romantic theme is treated with the lucidity of genius. The theme is, of course, that of the Fall and the story that of modern man: his painfully growing awareness of the lost unity between the dancer and the dance. Consciousness, self-consciousness, thought—the thought of Yeats' "Michael Robartes and the Dancer" and "Meru"—stands between man and his desire for the spontaneity of innocence and the integrity of being. Schiller, Kleist, and above all Hegel, believed that the Paradise, once lost, could only be regained *by thought*, by thought reaching that apex where consciousness itself becomes the crystallising force of a new and higher unity. Later sufferers of the metaphysical discomfort—Nietzsche, for example, D. H. Lawrence, or Yeats—were more impatient. Long before D. H. Lawrence discovered the liberating powers of Priapus, Nietzsche enthroned and celebrated Dionysus, the god of intoxication and ecstasy, in whose revels the conscious and self-conscious self vanishes, merging as it does with that universal dance that is not so much danced by the dancers as it *is* the dancers in their orgiastic self-forgetfulness. Nietzsche, Lawrence, Yeats—it would indeed be a great comfort if the world in which they wrote had afterwards embarked upon a different history. As it is, it is impossible to be sure that its recent terrors have nothing whatever to do with the fascinations the dark river-gods of the blood and the soil, Dionysus, Priapus, or Pan, have held for those minds.

WHEN YEATS READ in 1902 Thomas Common's anthology, he came upon some passages from the *Anti-Christ*, written by Nietzsche during the last months before his mental breakdown. It is likely that neither the compiler nor the reader recognised their vertiginous ambivalence, the ambivalence of the Romantic mind, the modern mind, at that pitch to which it rose with and through Nietzsche. In one of those passages Nietzsche speaks, with the violent brilliance his style assumed at that time, of the need for a new instinctive unreflectiveness in man's dealings with the aristocratic values by which he ought to live; of the need for an "automatism of instinct" to be achieved by the new élite; the achievement

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indeed of the oneness of dance and dancer. At that point Yeats noted in the margin:

*Were bodily functions like that of the pulse once conscious?*

This is a most dramatic and most revealing marginal gloss, and one that certainly does not ride roughshod over Nietzsche's meanings as other Yeatsian glosses had done in the margins of that anthology. The history of the world, it implies, is not what (among others) Hegel imagined it to be: a constant progress from "natural" functions towards consciousness. The opposite may be true: consciousness may be the primitive beginning, and unconsciousness the end. While Hegel thought that art, the product of the imagination, would have no place in the domain of absolute consciousness, Yeats' query reads, on the contrary, like a promise given to the artist that his "spontaneous creativity" would inherit the earth. Dance and dancer would once again be one. What is in the making in that margin is the anachronism of an artistic eschatology. The Day of Judgment will be the Day of Art.

It was, perhaps, this vestigially sustained anachronism that gave to Yeats' poetry the un-

inhibited poetic eloquence that is not likely to find its equal in whatever the future may hold for the art of language. If in Nietzsche's last message to his composer friend the earth was transfigured and all the heavens rejoiced, then it was Yeats' aim to allow the earth, even without its transfiguration, to rejoice with the joys of the old heavens. We are indeed the poorer, if less anachronistic, for not being able to believe in so happy an ending. Nietzsche, again and again, rehearsed such a blissful consummation. It was of no avail. In his beginning as well as in his end he knew that whosoever has built a new Heaven has gathered the strength for it in his own Hell; and this Hell, although he was certainly no Hegelian, was not altogether different from what Hegel meant by the unhappy consciousness. If there is to be Heaven again, it will be at the end of the mind's journey, not somewhere in the middle of it, brought to a halt there by the force of some dream of the imagination. Perhaps this is what T. S. Eliot meant when, *in a poem*, he wrote: "The poetry does not matter."

Oh yes, it matters, it matters very much. But there is no salvation through consciously induced spontaneities, and there is no salvation through Art.

## Look Somewhere in Anger

*By Norman Macrae*

THERE ARE lots of reasons why I will be unwise to review this book,<sup>1</sup> because I find myself in possibly pompous disagreement with practically everything that Mr. Kopkind says: indeed, as will emerge below, sometimes disagreement to the shaming point of backlash. But the book does stir in me some thoughts, which I think are worth setting down, about the gap between different generations of political intellectuals. In essence, I suppose, this review is going to be a diatribe against intellectuals in their 30s with what I regard as overworked inferiority complexes.

NORMAN MACRAE is the deputy editor of *The Economist* (London). He was the author of a remarkable special supplement (in a recent issue of that weekly) on the state of the U.S.A. entitled "The Neurotic Trillionaire" which attracted widespread attention. His previous contribution to *ENCOUNTER* was "The Faults in the Dynamos" (July 1965).

Mr. Kopkind himself is keen on discussing things in terms of generations. In the first sentence of his preface, he tells us that he is

a product (by-product?) of the "silent" generation of Americans, which came of "age" in the late 1950s.

That first sentence is reasonably representative of the most irritating faults in the otherwise stylish prose of the book, including the pretentious inverted commas where they are not needed, the ridiculous adjective silent about his generation, and the self-deprecatory parentheses about being a by-product. When I say stylish, I am not being flattering or cynical. Mr. Kopkind really can write with the pen of a prose poet, which makes some of his twitches of mind all the sadder. This generation of his contemporaries about which he is talking is also defined later in his book as

<sup>1</sup> *America: The Mixed Curse*. By ANDREW KOPKIND. Penguin Books, 7s. 6d.

the "generation of the Fifties" that exists in confused transition between the security of liberal careerism and the support of the radical movements.

Now I myself belong, in Mr. Kopkind's terminology, to the generation, presumably of liberal careerists, which came of age in the 1940s. More specifically, while Mr. Kopkind tells us in his book that "at last count" he was 33, I am 45—and am inclined to regard anybody who feels a need to put in the words "at last count," when talking about his own age, as some sort of insecure kook. This last piece of rudeness on my part is not inserted here as gratuitous nastiness, but because I think it is important in understanding a quite frequent unsympathy gap between what are now the early middle-aged and the really middle-aged generations. All of us self-styled radical intellectuals are to some extent (here I believe Mr. Kopkind is quite right) products of the subconscious assumptions that we carried into adulthood when we were idealistic, decently impatient, and about 21. As one who came of age in the 1940s, my own private assumptions about the last four generations are:

1. Those who came of age in the hungry, despairing, unemployment-ridden and eventually war-inviting decade of the 1930s contained

far too many of the gullible generation. I do not just mean here the gullible youth of Germany and Italy then, although fascism in those countries was bred out of some treachery by the intellectuals as well as out of pure thuggery by the yahoos. In hindsight, it is equally mystifying to me that so many young intellectuals, even in the despair of the 1930s, could have become admirers of the Soviet Union of their day, given the Stalinist terror that proceeded before their young eyes.

2. Those of us who came of age in the bloody but eventually victory-crowned 1940s can often legitimately be attacked as the arrogant generation. Although those who came after cannot understand the point, this was largely because many of our youthful ideals—and they were not ignoble ones—were almost magically fulfilled. I found in my loft recently the notes for a talk on "Hopes for the Post-war World" which I apparently inflicted on some discussion group within a few weeks of the end of the war. I see that I said that among the main things we ought to be fighting for when we became young ex-servicemen were: (a) that silly old traditionalists in government should not allow the world to slip back into mass unemployment, especially now that Keynesian economics had shown that this was quite certainly

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avoidable; (b) that America—despite its urges for isolationism—must be kept in a system of world collective security, because this was the only way to prevent either another enslavement or another war in Europe; (c) that Britain had got to press on to give freedom to India, and as quickly as possible thereafter to colonial Africa (although the inefficient legacy from colonial rule probably meant that independent Africa would be quite a mess); (d) that all liberal-minded people must reject the then current philosophy that Germany and Japan should or could be kept in permanent economic subjugation (by "Morgenthau plans" and the like), because creating economic slums in these countries would be the surest way of causing virulent nationalism to grow up again in them, and they would be much less harmfully employed making a lot of money. It seems to me quite extraordinary how far these basic hopes have been met in the ensuing twenty-five years, even although at the time it seemed wildly optimistic to state them. Of course there have been other hopes that were disappointed: such as dreams of a sensible Keynesian system of world monetary cooperation leading to world government (where we have been baulked by the professional and fuddy-duddy incompetence of national central bankers and Treasury civil servants, though with less disastrous results than I would have expected), and hopes about making factory work less soul-destroying by abolishing stand-to-attention class-consciousness in Britain's boss-worker relationships (where the advance has been much slower than it ideally ought to have been, although probably bigger than we at that time honestly expected). But the general picture for the generation of the 1940s has been of youthful dreams of a better world unprecedentedly accomplished. It was much more logical in 1945 to suppose that there would be another post-war slump, and that western Europe would be either overrun by Stalinism or destroyed in a nuclear war.

3. Those who came of age in the plush and eventually not doom-laden 1950s, like Mr. Kopkind, seem to me to have contained from the beginning far too many of the wet generation. They wandered about in their teenagehood mindlessly chanting "ban the bomb," under the leadership of the elderly semi-pacifists who had nearly betrayed the world to Hitler in the 1930s. They did not discover during the '50s any real causes to be idealistic about, any real faults in a society that was booming instead of busting and moving to co-existence instead of colder war. Indeed in one revealing passage Mr. Kopkind virtually says as much:

The recurrent theme—the nightmare—of the Sixties was the revelation of those faults in ways

Americans had never seen before. It is hard to believe that poverty was "discovered" in the U.S. only six years ago (the germinal event was Dwight MacDonald's review of Michael Harrington's book *The Other America*, in the *New Yorker* magazine). The depth of the race crisis was first felt in the Birmingham, Alabama, demonstrations in 1963. The nature of middle-class alienation was not even conceived until the student strikes and the hippie putches of 1967 and 1968. The consequences of America's advancing empire—even in the most virulent forms—were not glimpsed until the war in Vietnam had already become genocidal.

It is flattering for anybody writing a book review to be told that the writing of a book review can be a germinal event, providing ageing *enfants terribles* with the necessary stuff of youthful idealism and passion. But to normal liberals who, from teenagehood on, have always had a real world to want to be reforming, it is also strangely pathetic.

4. Those intellectuals who have come of age in the 1960s have much greater promise; they are rightly giving us furiously to think about some of the causes for self-satisfaction that we have taken for granted. But one trouble is that they are still being led by people from the inferiority-complex-ridden generation of the de-

cade before; and a mixture of radical mysticism with inferiority complexes gives one fascism.

THE DISTASTEFUL FEATURES of Mr. Kopkind's collected essays are the parts where this mixture becomes obvious. Internationally, it is much less worrying than the much worse variant of the same mixture was in Germany and Italy and Japan of the 1930s. If a number of insecure people with inferiority complexes feel they must do their thing by importing hatred into their poetically rounded sentences, then it is better that the hate buds are now sprouting in the anti-nationalism of a few anti-American American emotionalists, instead of in the nationalism which can arouse whole peoples and armies. But Mr. Kopkind, who is an intelligent man, should consider whether the enjoyable passion of his hatred really is not getting the better of his cool judgment when he writes about his own country, in a foreign magazine, as a supposedly reasonable summary of current international events:

Appropriate to its size and power, the U.S. has developed a global system of violence which replicates in gross detail the material of its own history. The American civilisation was founded on genocide and slavery: the extinction of the Indians was necessary for its political growth,

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the enslavement of the Negroes for its economic development.

This essay on "America's empire in revolt" goes on to say how in Europe "the few delights of American culture have been imported along with its many horrors," how in Asia "most Asian economies make more profits from the war in Vietnam than do U.S. corporations (if the two can be separated)," and how in Latin America the one "non-negotiable issue of American foreign policy is the control of most Latin American economies by U.S. corporations or their local agents." Another passage suggests, apparently seriously, as "the only reasonable explanation" of the *Pueblo* incident that the USS *Pueblo* set about "provoking its own capture," partly because in the spy game "public acclaim (and publishers' royalties) come only with failure." This passage is entirely representative of Mr. Kopkind's developed conspiracy theory of contemporary history; but the memory of the broken men who returned from North Korea, while Mr. Kopkind was living off his publishers' royalties (from Penguin and others) for writing this sort of traducement, somehow makes it more than representatively sickening.

In his views on American foreign policies, Mr. Kopkind does no more than damage the traditional case by his exaggerations. In American domestic policies he damages a better case in the same way. He tells us enthusiastically that "it is not hard to see how the young of this generation can be appalled. Their rage against the hypocrisy of the 'system' is the only appropriate reaction to the facts of the Fifties." This raises something of a smile, because by now it must be clear to the reader that young Mr. Kopkind plainly spent the Fifties searching desperately for something to be enraged about. In another passage he says that his own profession of journalism in America gives one few status symbols other than inside-dopesterism; this is a form of self-pity which really does need to be avoided by American journalists, of all people, so long as they maintain any sense of either proportion or the ridiculous. But one genuinely shining cause does lie before decent American liberals who have the courage to fight battles: the cause of civil rights for black Americans. It was to be hoped and expected that Mr. Kopkind would adopt this cause as his own. It was also to be feared and expected that he would do the cause some damage. He duly does so in two respects.

The less serious damage comes from his usual vice of emotional exaggeration to the point that invites ridicule. He proclaims to us that

Whites who have Negro maids, or who have their shoes cleaned by Negro bootblacks, or who

vote for the one Negro in their school to be class president, are all participating in American racism.

In his report on Watts, he says that "the August revolts charged the entire Negro population with that sense of 'black power' that combines dignity, pride, hatred of whites and Negro brotherhood"; this phrase about the "entire Negro population" being charged with "hatred of whites" is wishful apprehension.

THE MORE SERIOUS DAMAGE inflicted by intellectuals of Mr. Kopkind's type arises when they try to make bully-boy tactics look excusable. This emerges most clearly in his two essays on the (originally amiable) farce of the National Conference for the New Politics in 1968. Mr. Kopkind describes its opening in the light prose which makes much of his writing a real delight. The staff director for the conference was a distracted college professor who "wore dirty white bucks and cared about the war in Vietnam." The amorphous mass for the conference gathered in an unfortunate Hilton hotel in Chicago where "students and ghetto delegates camped out every night in the foyer by each floor's elevator bank; the house dicks decided not to interfere." Although all sorts of "delegates" from representative organisations had been invited, "at the end anyone who wanted to could wander in and find a seat up front."

Those who wandered most decisively up front were a black caucus of about a hundred delegates, under Mr. James Forman, who demanded that they should be allowed to vote half the convention's vote as a bloc, and virtually got their way—with the result that some very odd motions were passed. Mr. Kopkind's description of this event is that

In an extraordinarily blunt and effective speech SNCC's former executive secretary, James Forman, put it to the convention "We're going to liberate you whether you want to be liberated or not."

In his next essay Mr. Kopkind, to his credit, prints a reply from others who attended the conference, which puts matters in a somewhat different light:

Mr. Kopkind describes James Forman's speech as "extraordinarily blunt and effective." Why does he not report that Forman was escorted by a flying wedge of bodyguards who pushed whites from the platform and stood glaring at the audience as Forman spoke? Why not report that Forman appointed himself chairman and passed resolutions without letting others speak? ... Mr. Kopkind omits mention of the physical intimidation against both blacks and whites practised by members of the Black Caucus and by



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black teenagers present at the hotel. Mr. James Bevel, for example, was physically threatened when he tried to express his differences with others in the Black Caucus.

Mr. Kopkind's reply to this criticism is that "No one who has written or spoken about the convention, to my knowledge, has denied that there was a great deal of foolishness, some bullying and endemic mindlessness during those days." But he feels that the black caucus must "be recognised for what it was: the most powerful, most radical motive force in the U.S." The resolutions which the convention accepted under Mr. Forman's glare "did symbolise notions of revolution, Black Power, and anti-imperialism which most white radicals would support." There were "parts of the resolutions"—including, incidentally, some critics will say, manifestations of black anti-Semitism—"to which most of the delegates, in a different political context, would have objected, and their acceptance of the whole package at NCNP was a disagreeable task. If there were any moral virgins before there are none after that convention." Finally, Mr. Kopkind is "sorry that the Rev. Mr. Bevel was threatened, but I trust that he can take care of himself."

It is these last sentences that lose my remaining sympathy for Mr. Kopkind. There are some people who can write such sentences as "I am sorry so-and-so was threatened, but I trust that he can take care of himself"; there are others who feel a real chill of horror that such sentences can be written by an educated and sentient man. I suspect that in the first category belong some people who are too young to remember where similar surrenders of "moral virginity" led in the 1930s, plus some people who are old enough to have compromised their own moral virginity in some such directions during the 1930s (no doubt generally only a little bit, as Mr. Kopkind is now willing to do). But to me it seems that those who can write such sentences are taking far too short a spoon to sup with the devil: especially when their main reason for attending the supper appears to be eagerness to get high on some drug that will assuage their guilt complexes for having been such aimless intellectuals during their own fast disappearing youth.

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## The Irony of Negro Progress in America

*A Controversial Exchange — By RICHARD YOUNG*

A YEAR AGO, ENCOUNTER published an article by Professor Nathan Glazer entitled "America's Race Paradox," which dealt with the apparent contradiction between the social progress made by black Americans in recent years and the concomitant development of black radicalism. Professor Glazer's analysis was intelligent and subtle, and it does not lend itself to an easy summation. However, a few central points clearly emerged. First of all, Glazer forcefully argued that "things are getting better" for Afro-Americans, and he presented numerous figures to demonstrate the significant socio-economic advances which black Americans have made during the 1960s. Second, Glazer argued that this improvement in the objective well-being of blacks has been accompanied by an increase in black alienation, militancy, and nationalism. Finally, while Glazer was far from complacent about the responsibilities of white Americans in dealing with America's racial problems, he implied that the primary barrier to a peaceful solution of these problems may be the separatist goals of black militants. According to Glazer,

there is a failure to understand, on the part of black militants and their too-complaisant white allies, that there is an American society with a tremendous power to incorporate and make part of itself new groups, to their advantage and not to the advantage of the larger society, and that this is not a *white* society.

Implicit to Glazer's analysis was the thesis that black socio-economic problems are being solved

by existing public and private policies and that black militancy has become an irrational barrier to the successful incorporation of black Americans into the mainstream of American society.

Professor Glazer is obviously not a racist; nor is he insensitive to the problems of black Americans. Nevertheless, I feel that Glazer's article was misleading in many respects, and, of greater importance, the type of thinking displayed contributes, all in all, to a perpetuation of the current racial crisis in America rather than to its solution.

TO BEGIN WITH, Glazer's assumption that things are getting better for black Americans is debatable. An assessment of black social progress really depends on how one defines the situation. For example, examining black incomes, things are clearly improving if one looks at *absolute* increases. However, if one's focus is the absolute difference in income between white and black Americans, one finds that this gap is growing. My own view is that the most useful indicator is the *relative difference* between white and black earnings. Looking at American race relations from this perspective, we find that black income, *relative to white income*, has remained about constant since World War II. The table below, based on the U.S. governmental report cited by Glazer, shows the ratio of non-white to white family income in America from 1950 through 1966:<sup>1</sup>

How well do sociological exercises hold up? A year ago we published an important article by Professor Nathan Glazer, of Harvard, on the Negro situation in America. Looking back on it after a period of change and crisis, RICHARD YOUNG, who teaches political science at Stanford, thinks that the quick-changing signs of the times must be read differently. His critique gives Professor Glazer an opportunity to reassess his own theses in the adjoining reply.

<sup>1</sup> United States Bureau of the Census, *Social and Economic Conditions of Negroes in the United States*, October 1967 (Washington: Government Printing Office), p. 15. For recent socio-economic profiles of the American Negro, see Thomas F. Pettigrew, *A Profile of the Negro American* (Van Nostrand, 1964); and St. Clair Drake, "The Social and Economic Status of the Negro in the United States," Rashi Fein, "An Economic and Social Profile of the Negro American," and Daniel Moynihan, "Employment, Income, and the Ordeal of the Negro Family," all in *The Negro American* (Houghton Mifflin, 1966).

Year	Ratio
1950	.54
1952	.57
1954	.56
1956	.53
1958	.51
1960	.55
1962	.53
1964	.56
1966	.60

As these figures indicate, black family income has fluctuated between 50% and 60% of white income during the past two decades. There is no reason to assume that the modest gains made by Negroes during the Viet Nam War will continue. Non-white income increased during the Korean War to 57% of white income in 1952; in the subsequent post-war period this figure fell to nearly 50%. The current policies of the Nixon Administration suggest that domestic programmes will not be initiated to offset the economic dislocations which will accompany an ending of the Viet Nam War; these dislocations are likely to affect black Americans—who are the “last hired, and first fired”—far more severely than other Americans.

While Negro income has remained relatively constant at slightly more than half of white income, Negro unemployment has been consistently double that of whites. The table below shows the ratio of non-white to white unemployment from 1950 through 1966:<sup>2</sup>

Year	Ratio
1950	1.8
1952	1.9
1954	2.0
1956	2.3
1958	2.1
1960	2.1
1962	2.2
1964	2.1
1966	2.2

The political despair which is felt by Negroes is not so paradoxical when one understands two basic facts: (1) The relative deprivation of black Americans has remained constant since World War II. (2) During this period, there has been a dramatic rise in the level of Negro expectations—albeit for reasons not directly analogous to Tocqueville’s analysis of the French Revolution. The first proposition I have already dis-

cussed; those interested in more detailed discussions of this point should consult the sources cited. The second point is far more complex and deserves some discussion because it is directly relevant to understanding black militancy in the U.S.A. The recent rise in the level of Negro expectation can be understood only in the context of Negro American history.

THE BASIC FACTS of this history are well known. African slaves were brought to the English colonies of North America before the arrival of the *Mayflower*. Slavery existed in America for two centuries, and its abolition occurred only after a prolonged civil war. Attempts by Northern radicals in Congress to establish racial political and economic equality failed after the Civil War, and within a dozen years Southern whites regained full political control over the affairs of the states of the former Confederacy. Until the 1950s, the majority of Afro-Americans—those living in the South—suffered severe economic deprivation, lived in a rigid caste system, and were denied basic political and legal rights.

The psychological effects of this experience are not so well understood. As Stanley Elkins demonstrated in his classic study, slavery destroyed the African’s cultural heritage and conditioned the slave in such a manner that he passively acquiesced in his own subjugation.<sup>3</sup> The abolition of slavery did not solve the problems created by it; instead, the history of American race relations during most of the past century is a tale of overt racism on *both* sides of the Mason-Dixon line. Racist theories were accepted as the conventional wisdom throughout America until the Second World War. Psychological and sociological findings which “scientifically” demonstrated the inferiority of the Negro race appeared in academic journals and texts as recently as the 1930s. Extreme *de facto* segregation existed in the North until the late 1940s, as did the popularity of tasteless “Jim Crow” humour in the mass media. In the South, a rigid caste system was a way of life until Federal intervention brought about major changes in the past decade. As a result of these racist practices, Negro Americans were constantly humiliated and reminded of the “fact” of their inferiority. The psychological effect was a low sense of self-esteem and the acceptance of a “nigger” role defined by the dominant white society. This socially induced damage to his sense of self-respect and worth was the Afro-American’s “mark of oppression.”<sup>4</sup>

In *An American Dilemma* (published during World War II), Gunnar Myrdal stressed the

<sup>2</sup>*Social and Economic Conditions of Negroes in the United States*, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup>*Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (1963).

<sup>4</sup>See Abram Kardiner & Lionel Ovesey, *The Mark of Oppression* (1962).



disparity between the "American Creed" and the actual conditions of Negroes in the United States. Myrdal noted that the exclusion of black Americans from American democracy could only be justified by racist assumptions. Once the equality of the races was demonstrated—which American social science did in fact do in the 1930s—Myrdal's analysis suggested that black Americans would become full participants in the American social system. In many respects recent American history supports Myrdal's conclusions. Racist stereotypes have been purged from the mass media, and racial equality is preached in the nation's educational institutions. White public opinion has changed so dramatically in the past three decades that by the late 1950s even in the South a majority of whites accepted, at least in theory, the principle of racial equality.<sup>5</sup> Beginning with the Brown decision of the Supreme Court in 1954, and culminating with the 1964 and 1965 Civil Rights Acts, the federal government has frontally attacked white Southern institutions of segregation and black political disfranchisement.

THE ABOVE ACCOUNT is clearly in accord with Professor Glazer's argument, so I would like to emphasise here two important developments of the post-war period which Glazer ignores. The first is the psychological effect that the changes listed above had on *black* Americans after World War II. The second is the fact that the resolution of the "American dilemma" described by Myrdal did *not* solve the problem of race relations in America.

Whether or not white acceptance of the concept of racial equality during the 1940s was hypocritical, it seems clear that this significant change in white attitudes had a deep effect on how Negro Americans viewed themselves. No longer caricatured in the mass media and told that they were inferior to whites in their schools, Negroes grew up in the post-war period—particularly in the North—with a pride that was to inaugurate a new chapter in American race relations. No longer passive, second-class citizens in a culture which defined them as inferior, they acted with the impatience of white Americans in seeking quick solutions to their problems. Turning first to mass demonstrations in the late 1950s, then to civil disobedience, and finally to urban riots, large numbers of blacks, mostly young, expressed their frustrations over

the fact that they were denied socio-economic equality to whites.

The young Afro-American of the 1960s—if I might suggest an ideal type—is unlike the Negro of the past. He is assertive, defiant, courageous, and impatient. He wants solutions to complex socio-economic problems "*now*." Ironically, he differs little in his basic personality from white Americans. The violence that typifies American society in general is indicative of the fact that Americans tend to react to problems swiftly, forcefully, and courageously, if not always wisely or carefully. White Americans, faced with the socio-economic conditions of urban blacks, would almost certainly react in an extremist manner. The most significant fact in American race relations since World War II is that large numbers of black Americans have abandoned the "nigger" role, and even the "Negro" role, for the "black" role, a role based on the premise that blacks are indeed equal to whites. The fact that the *relative* conditions of black Americans have not improved since World War II has pushed many of them to the edge of rebellion.

Negro Americans have come to realise in growing numbers that the application of the "American Creed" to blacks has not meant a solution to their problems. The American ideology stresses equality of opportunity, not of condition. The fact that blacks enjoy—on paper and increasingly in fact—the same political and legal rights as other Americans and are even protected by law in respect to equality of job opportunity, has not led, nor is it likely to lead, to a redistribution of wealth and power between black and white Americans so that blacks are able as a group to enjoy the standard of living and control over their individual lives currently enjoyed by white Americans as a group.

Again, Negro history is relevant. Until the Civil War, the American economy functioned in a crude way like the economic model described by Adam Smith in *Wealth of Nations*. Large numbers of small white capitalists were able to prosper in the free-enterprise economy which existed; numerous historians have pointed out that *laissez-faire* capitalism was regarded by Jeffersonian and Jacksonian democrats as the vehicle by which a more democratic and egalitarian America would be achieved.<sup>6</sup> During this period Negroes, held as slaves, could be neither capitalists nor workers, but were legally defined as property. After the Civil War, the American economy shifted towards heavy corporate industry. Nevertheless, a serious labour shortage existed, and unskilled immigrants came to the U.S.A. to work in the large factories of the industrial North-east.

<sup>5</sup> Herbert Hyman & Paul Sheatsley, "Attitudes toward Desegregation," *Scientific American* (July 1964), pp. 16-23.

<sup>6</sup> For example, see Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition* (1948).

These factory jobs provided an avenue for social mobility, and the descendants of these immigrants have entered the mainstream of the American middle class. During this period, Southern blacks were kept on plantations as share-croppers by state laws which prevented Northern capitalists from recruiting black labour. The flood of European immigration to America came to a close during the First World War. The descendants of these immigrants benefited from the trade union movements of the 1930s and have been either upwardly mobile or have at least kept pace with the recent technological changes in the American economy.

In contrast to the white immigrants who came to America during a period of economic expansion, black Americans have migrated northward primarily since the 1940s. The rural industrialisation of the South has made their labour unnecessary to white prosperity; their lack of education and industrial skills makes them incapable of absorption into the technologically sophisticated jobs available in the North. While the minority of blacks who have technical and professional skills enjoy opportunities similar to those of their white counterparts, the majority of blacks suffer from the fact that they lack the training required by an advanced industrial society. Millions of Negro Americans are unemployed or under-employed, and American schools—whether in the rural South or in urban ghettos—continue to turn out young blacks who are often functionally illiterate regardless of how many years they have spent in school buildings. To those who are affected, it does not really matter if Negro poverty results from overt racism or the impersonal workings of the American economy. The result is the same. Time will not solve this problem. Instead, the passage of time means only that the gap will increase between the skills needed by the American industrial state and the skills possessed by most Negroes.

THE POINT WHICH I wish to emphasise here is that the racial crisis in America will not be solved by lecturing Negroes on why they should accept a model of the American social and economic system which they know perfectly well has not in the past and does not in the present apply to them. If a racial civil war is to be avoided in the United States—and I feel that it can be avoided—white Americans must face the race problem honestly and provide realistic solutions. Right or wrong, black Americans are demanding equality of economic conditions with whites. They reject gradualism because they have become, as I have suggested above, truly American in their impatience about the problems confronting them.

AS A START, white Americans must recognise that most black demands are legitimate, realistic responses to the socio-economic problems facing the Negro community. For example, many whites are critical of what they perceive to be a contradiction between a black insistence on autonomy—black-administered schools, businesses, and communities—on the one hand and black demands for public and private aid on the other. Yet this contradiction vanishes when one remembers that the historical experience of Negroes has been, first, exploitation and, then, forced exclusion from the mainstream of the American economy. The virgin lands have now been settled, the industrial economy has matured, and even the demand for unskilled labour is gone. As a result, the “freedom” to be culturally autonomous is meaningless. In the 19th century, social and economic opportunity appeared to be dependent upon a governmental policy of *laissez-faire*, and millions of white Americans of various ethnic backgrounds benefited from those opportunities. Now that the frontier is gone, the realities of contemporary America are such that the creation of black schools, colleges, businesses, and communities requires more than black pride and stamina; massive financial support from the (predominantly white) public sector is required as well.

In light of the Afro-American historical experience, black demands are really rather modest. A comparison between Negro and white college radicals may illustrate this point. White radicals, perhaps for good reasons, are often so disenchanted with the *status quo* in America that they are uninterested in incremental change, no matter how massive. Many of them feel that only total revolution will create a humane society. In respect to their social analyses, the black radicals in the numerous Black Student Unions (BSU) on American campuses are no less critical; however, their goals are far more concrete and pragmatic. The admission of black students, the recruitment of black teachers, the establishment of black curricula—these are the issues which concern Negro students. While BSU may be as forceful as the white radicals in fighting for its demands, the goals of the groups are quite disparate.

Black demands are not inconsistent with the pluralistic model of American society described by Professor Glazer and others. Where Glazer is in error is his assumption that existing white attitudes and policies are consistent with the satisfaction of legitimate black demands. Glazer wrote of the “subtle and complex adjustments [which] were made to accommodate a wide variety of differences” among other ethnic

groups in earlier historical periods. The problem is that in a mature industrial society, these adjustments involve more than the often grudging freedom granted such groups as the Irish, Jews, or Mormons during earlier stages in America's development. White Americans seem unwilling either to support the massive governmental programmes necessary to establish socioeconomic equality between the races or to surrender any of their control over institutions necessary for the development of black autonomy *within* the American social system. If blacks are to have relevant college educations, this means dislocations within predominantly white universities. If blacks are to enter into the industrial mainstream, they must gain entrance into predominantly white unions causing white workers to lose their monopolistic control over many sectors of skilled labour. If the black minorities of our cities are allowed to establish separate, black-ruled communities, many white politicians will face severe losses in power.

EVENTS HAVE NOT shown whites to be willing to come to grips with these difficult issues. Since Professor Glazer's article appeared, an overtly racist candidate for the Presidency received over nine million votes, while another candidate who offered "law and order" and a curtailment of the War on Poverty was elected. President Nixon's actions in office have provided little support for the view that the social welfare programmes initiated by President Lyndon Johnson will be continued and expanded. The economic policies of the current Administration have already countered the economic progress made by blacks during the Viet Nam War; Negro unemployment appears to be rising. On the political front, reaction seems to be setting in. Recent local elections in Los Angeles, Minneapolis, and New York City indicate that most whites are far more interested in social stability than social progress.

If racial violence continues to escalate in the United States, it will not be because of the irrational appeal of black nationalism, but because the American social system continues to be unresponsive to Negro demands for the degree of control over their lives and the level of well-being which are enjoyed by most white Americans. At the moment black separatists have little support; a study made last year for the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders found that only 6% of the Negro respondents favoured a "separate nation here." Nevertheless, a large number of Negroes are deeply alienated and are sympathetic to many aspects of the black nationalist movement. If conditions do not dramatically improve, and white Americans continue to greet black de-

mands with cries for "law and order" and token welfare programmes, then the radical critics of American society will have been proved right and civil strife will be unavoidable.

## A Reply

THE DISTANCE BETWEEN Mr. Young and myself is not large—I am relieved to see that he does not indulge in the inflamed rhetoric which is characteristic of so much discussion of Negro problems in the U.S.A. And yet it would not do to fudge over the differences. I did emphasise there had been considerable progress; I did say that perhaps the major obstacle to future progress would be found not in white but in black attitudes, attitudes that might make it impossible for Negroes to accommodate themselves to a society in which, despite a substantial degree of equality of opportunity, some degree of inequality in achievement persisted. Of course there are serious problems with white attitudes—the question remains whether future progress is dependent on a further diminution in negative white attitudes to blacks or on new public programmes.

The figures as to "black progress" in recent years are complex—I gave some, Mr. Young gives others. There is little question that the gap between Negro and white income has not been much reduced—in absolute terms, on some measures, it has even increased. I would, however, point out that this gap has not increased—and, at least in recent years, has been reduced—at a time when income of all Americans was rising rapidly. This in itself is not an achievement to be taken lightly. But there are other marks of progress—the closing of the inequalities on education (measured by length of education); the rapid increase in the proportions of blacks who hold white-collar jobs (this does show much more substantial progress than the income figures); the enormous increase in elected Negro officials (still much below their proportions in the population); the huge increase in blacks in élite colleges (now beginning to approximate the national proportion).

I would not agree that Negroes have made no relative advance—but this is not essential to Mr. Young's argument. Even if there had been *some* relative improvement, as I am convinced the evidence shows there has, the rise in the level of expectations could still have increased black despair. Mr. Young leans on another argument which I think has little merit—that whereas other groups could raise themselves,

through the opportunities of *laissez-faire* capitalism, or through unskilled labour in a rapidly growing industrial economy, both of these channels are now much narrower than in the past. I am not sure this is true—the evidence is surprisingly weak to support *both* these widely held views. There is no decline in the number of small businesses that are opened, or the numbers that succeed (or fail); nor is there any decline in the need for unskilled labour. The *Wall Street Journal* regularly publishes articles on how hard it is to get unskilled—as well as skilled—labour.

What *is* true is that entry into the small-business economy requires, in addition to the capital, entrepreneurial skills and attitudes it has always required, a higher level of skill and training in dealing with the booby-trap-ridden, somewhat managed economy—managed that is by government, at three or more levels, by big business, and by unions. Negroes have always been hampered by their inexperience and by discrimination in going into small business. Today, while discrimination has lessened, and various programmes make some degree of capital available, the experience required for success has increased enormously. This is a serious problem, and is perhaps the main reason why it was never possible to expect too much from “Black Capitalism.” As long as we don’t know how to make an entrepreneur, we can only be experimental in efforts to increase the numbers of black entrepreneurs.

As for unskilled labour—the problem is *not* that jobs are not available, but that the rise in expectations has made them undesirable. Many don’t pay enough; they don’t have the protection of year-round employment; they don’t put one on a ladder leading to increased pay and responsibility; they do not provide fringe benefits in the way of vacations, medical care, etc.

In discussing problems of employment and under-employment in the U.S., I think one should be aware of this facet. The unemployment rate is higher, and much higher among Negroes, less because of the absolute shortage of jobs than because there are many jobs people will not take. In the Northern industrial states, with high levels of welfare support which will provide income above that provided by minimum-pay jobs, this is a particular problem. In New York City, one-eighth of the population is on welfare. Much of this 1,000,000 consists of the unemployables, and of women whose husbands have abandoned them (and their children). Still, tens of thousands—perhaps many more—are employable. But as one client has been reported saying, “Welfare is the best job going around here. . . .” There are other jobs—but welfare is the best.

ONE SHOULD RECOGNISE this is in large measure a *cultural* problem to which there is no simple answer. Some people will work at a minimum-pay job even if welfare will give them more. Others will not. And increasing numbers will not if the stigma attached to welfare is reduced (as it increasingly is) by liberal and radical justifications for welfare.

We should see the positive side of this development—many Negroes (and of course others) will not work at low-paying jobs without security and prospects for advancement because they can do as well on welfare. This does reflect the increased self-respect, pride, and the higher expectations that Mr. Young (and I) refer to. But one must not be too Pollyanna-ish—it may also reflect an unreal set of expectations that no society can match “*now*.”

OBVIOUSLY THERE IS NO way of going back to the narrower expectations and hopes that permitted whole generations of Negroes to work at poor jobs. But it is unrealistic to think that the great numbers who refuse these jobs can *in very short order* be qualified for other jobs—indeed, since they cannot, many of our social programmes consist of the creation of high-flown white-collar jobs that can be given to Negroes, and which are probably not terribly productive. This is not very different from other political jobs that have been characteristically distributed by political machines in American cities for a long time. But there *are* limits to how far this kind of job creation can be carried.

Mr. Young points out that white racial attitudes no longer form a major bar to Negro progress—the major bar is in the failure to develop and mount large programmes which will overcome black inferiority, and in surrendering white control over institutions necessary for black autonomy. I think he gives too simple a picture. What are these institutions over which conflict has occurred?

**Universities.**—There has been a rapid increase in Negro administrators; a rapid increase in Negro college teachers—so rapid, indeed, that there is a danger of denuding the Southern Negro universities, and this increase occurs even though the pool of black graduate students (despite varied kinds of support) has shown hardly any increase at all in recent years. There has been a rapid increase in Negro college students—most of the Ivy League colleges will have 10 per cent of their entering classes Negro. There are large numbers of “black studies” programmes starting. Conflict has occurred in all these areas. In some cases, demands have been raised that cannot be accommodated without intense conflict—for example, the demand

that 50 per cent of the places to the free City College of New York be reserved for Negroes and Puerto Ricans (a proportion far higher than their proportion in the city) and without consideration for their grades or courses of study.

**Public schools.**—There has been a fierce struggle in New York City over "community control" of the schools. Let us understand the issue—Negroes participate in the control of the schools, just as whites do, through the election of the Mayor, and through his appointment of a representative Board of Education. This was declared to be insufficient, and Negroes demanded that smaller, elected school boards for smaller areas of the city control the schools. This demand was supported by Mayor Lindsay and most of the leading figures of the city—but it was fought by the Teachers' Union which feared that teachers would be dismissed from, or would be unable to achieve, posts to which they had rights by seniority and union contract. This was an enormously difficult problem—but some degree of community control through local elected boards has now been granted under State law.

**Institutions in black communities.**—These are now almost entirely in the hands of Negroes. No one would dream of setting up a local poverty agency, model cities agency, urban renewal advisory board, or an agency of any type in a largely black area that was not largely black. The problem here is that there are many different political groupings and tendencies, and it is often impossible to find a representative principle for this new flood of local control agencies that will permit any action at all. Thus, the rebuilding of the burned-out business districts of Negro areas has been hampered by the difficulty of getting varied community groups to agree on a plan (this has been the specific problem in Washington, D.C.). The issue has been in many cases less too little control but rather no mechanism whereby conflicts over local control can be reconciled so they can lead to some sort of programme.

**Business in black communities.**—Naturally, in a society where private property is a cardinal principle it is not easy to simply hand over the businesses and land. Yet, in effect, we are already close to this. Many of the businesses have been destroyed in the rioting; many others are available for very small sums; much of the land is extremely cheap; and there is so little profit to be made now from housing in Negro slum districts that many of the houses now lie abandoned. There is no problem in Negroes acquiring much of the business and land in black communities—but the problems of business enterprise and housing management in

communities with high crime rates, high insurance rates, vandalism and the like are such that even expropriation (and some of the businesses have in effect been expropriated) does not guarantee they can be conducted at a profit or that the housing can be managed at a profit—by anyone, white or black!

Thus the slogan, "black control of business and housing in black communities," does not mean much. Much of the business and the housing is available for the taking—but there is no one to take it. When rental properties are abandoned in New York City (and at least 50,000 units are now abandoned), one would think the tenants would simply live there *rent-free*. They do not. They desert immediately because they do not have the resources, financial or managerial, to provide hot water and heat, to carry out repairs, etc. The same thing is true of many of the businesses. The slogan is incomplete—to whom does one give control, and how much capital does one have to invest before the properties handed over become viable, if ever?

**Police.**—It is true there has been little movement towards local control of police in black communities. But at this point it is a question whether black businessmen and middle-class Negroes would favour such a move—or indeed how many poor Negroes, who suffer terribly from crime, would favour it. Just as it becomes difficult to know how, or to whom, to turn over control for development of an urban renewal plan—so many interests conflict, even within the so-called "black" community—it would also be difficult to create the kind of community institutions, representative of and with safeguards for minorities, to which to turn over control of police. Various experiments to develop a local constabulary have been suggested; some are being tentatively tried.

**F**INALLY, I WONDER about Mr. Young's analysis of events since the election of President Nixon. No one can minimise the gravity of Governor George Wallace's appeal—still, it was quite modest in the Northern cities. It remained a Southern vote, based on the peculiar conditions of that peculiar section. Nor can anyone minimise the dangers, for Negroes and for domestic peace, of a policy that is willing to see an increase in unemployment to reduce the rate of inflation and improve the international balance of trade. And yet, there has been no increase in unemployment, nor in Negro unemployment. Nor have there been cut-backs in the social welfare programmes. The poverty programme is maintained at close to its old levels. Even President Johnson's chief officials agreed that so many programmes in so many

fields had been begun, it would be pointless to start new ones—the old ones must be improved, coordinated, modified, for there are limits to the capacities of a government to administer.

The reaction on the domestic front is much exaggerated. A Negro candidate for mayor in Los Angeles did not win—but he received *almost half the vote* in a city in which only 10% of the voters are Negro. In New York Mayor Lindsay was barely edged out by a conservative Republican—but the Republican Party is naturally the seat of conservatives; the conservative candidate in this case himself sponsors civil-rights legislation, and since he is Italian and 40% of enrolled Republicans are Italian, Mayor Lindsay would in any case have had a hard time. The conservative Democrat won in a primary—but he received only one-third of the vote, and four liberals divided the rest.

My argument—in two articles in *ENCOUNTER*—has been that the problems to which people demand answers “*now*,” immediately, are enormously complex, and that the main obstacle in their way is not primarily the unresponsiveness of the American political system or the state of white public opinion. Both of these *are* problems. Let me point out they are not problems for Negroes alone. Consider how long it took President Kennedy to carry through Congress a *cut* in taxes, a necessary first-step in getting the American economy to move more rapidly. Consider the difficulties President Nixon is having to maintain a surtax which is critical to contain inflation. Consider what political resources must be invested in these and other measures which themselves do not incorporate any “advanced thinking” about policy approaches that would be helpful for Negroes. We face not only the general problem of a system of government in which power is not concentrated (as it is in England) but is so widely diffused that enormous energies are required to institute any new programmes, and so many interests must be accommodated that these are badly flawed.

We also have an additional problem—we don’t know what policies would work. Some of the ablest men in American public life are now engaged in developing some revision of the welfare system, on which a good part of the Negro population of Northern cities is dependent. Leaving aside all the political problems, the fact is the best informed people *differ* as to what should be done. The guaranteed

annual income or negative income tax had far from universal acceptance among the best informed, and the details as to how it would work, though not as yet worked out, are critical to its success. Indeed, as social policy becomes more complex, this can be said of policy in many fields, such as education, medical care, housing, job training, and the like. In each of these fields, once past the general principles, success depends on details of legislation, administrative regulations, vigour of administration, etc., etc.

I HAVE FOCUSED on these problems because as a matter of fact the answers are not at hand, even if the money were. To give young Negro boys high salaries for jobs is to undermine the position of Negro men as heads of their families. To provide high subsidies for housing arouses the antagonism of those who pay for housing without subsidy. To provide higher levels of welfare leads to withdrawal from the labour force. To increase minimum wages, in order to make work more attractive in the face of higher welfare payments, increases unemployment among the young and unskilled. To increase funds for education seems to increase salaries without improving education. Indeed, nothing very clearly improves education. And so it goes.

These are not insoluble dilemmas—they *are* problems. But meanwhile attention is drawn away from the problems in their concreteness, and a large sense of grievance is cultivated—and a justifiable one, in large measure, as one can find justifications for most grievances—which ensues in increasingly militant demands, that either *cannot be met* or, if met, *do nothing to change the situation*. One may well be frustrated by the dilemmas of contemporary industrial society—but what is happening on a wider and wider scale is that these frustrations are being worked upon by leaders to the point where they increasingly find an outlet in rage. And that rage can destroy the country. It has already captured a substantial portion of the youth. If one is convinced—as I am—that separatism in a country as integrated as the United States can only increase frustrations, and can provide no solutions, one must point to the political energies directed—often irresponsibly and thoughtlessly—to militant separatism as one of the key obstacles in the way of improving the domestic conditions in this country.

Nathan Glazer

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## POINTS OF THE COMPASS

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### Letter from Macao

By George Mikes

THE FORTY MILES SEA-JOURNEY between Hong Kong and Macao takes you from China to the Mediterranean. Hong Kong is a huge, busy, bustling metropolis, where the whole population is chasing money with breathless greed; Macao is small and sleepy. And it is engagingly Latin: Portuguese names and notices—repeated in Chinese, with huge, picturesque ideographs—little houses transplanted from the banks of the Douro and the Tejo, charming little squares, balconies, graceful arcades and an easy-going, indolent why-hurry?-life-is-here-to-enjoy atmosphere. One sees many more Portuguese faces than English ones. Even the Chinese coolies, in conical hats, carrying two large buckets on long rods placed across their shoulders and trotting along with tiny dancing steps, often have strong Latin features. The old story again. The British as colonisers kept scrupulously away from the “natives”—and if they slipped up now and then they had what was regarded as the decency to have nothing to do with their bastards; the Portuguese—less humane and harsher in a few other respects—mixed freely, procreated innumerable offspring and accepted them as their own. As Senhor Joaquim Morais Alves, President of Macao’s Loyal Senate, remarked:

“We Portuguese always slept with all women on all Continents. For centuries, missionaries and other good Christians upbraided us for being promiscuous and sinful and pointed to the English as noble and virtuous. Then attitudes changed. And now our past behaviour is held up as humane and democratic while the British are branded as a conceited master-race, having kept themselves apart!”

“Which has a moral, I’m sure,” I said, and he nodded.

GEORGE MIKES’ contributions to ENCOUNTER include “Letter from Fiji” (April 1968), “Letter from Cyprus” (March 1965) and “Alien’s Return” (September 1964).

“The moral is obvious. Commit all the vices; you never know when they’ll become virtues.”

The effect of 400 years of co-existence is, of course, mutual. Both languages—Portuguese and Chinese—succeeded in bastardising each other into a charming, yet ugly, Macao vernacular. And I was pleased to learn from Senhor Alves’ remark that Chinese wisdom mixed well with Latin clarity.

IF YOU LOOK RIGHT OR LEFT from the ancient Monte Fort, you see—right in front of your nose—lands belonging to Red China, the Chinese mainland, Chinese junks carrying food and other goods into Macao, displaying the compulsory red flag and the even more compulsory picture of Mao Tse-tung. But right in front of you there is the small-town life of a Portuguese Maupassant, fossilised in the last century or earlier. The local notables, the magistrate, the mayor, the various administrators, the pharmacist, the architect and some rich merchants chatting, gossiping and sipping beer in the Solmar, despising the hordes of—mostly Japanese—tourists who dash in for a hurried lunch, and feeling infinitely superior to them. (All over the world, the most liberal places included, there is still strong discrimination against two races: one is the *poor*—surely a separate race of humanity in most people’s eyes—and the second the *tourists*, regarded as the lowest form of human existence, the new untouchables.)

A Macao journalist, Adam Lee, told me:

“If someone threw a hand-grenade into the Café Solmar at two o’clock, after lunch, the administration of Macao would come to a standstill. No one would remain to carry on....”

This, I found later, was a slight exaggeration. Another hand-grenade would be needed: one for the Solmar, the other for the Esplanada. But the *two* would certainly do the trick.

ONE KNOWS—and I knew—very little of Macao. I thought it was a minor Hong Kong, a small Portuguese colony next door to a small English one, only more interesting than its British neighbour because it was (so I imagined) a den of iniquity, a paradise for gamblers, smugglers, opium smokers and refugees from China. This preconceived image—as most preconceived images—was wrong: the truth, as usual, was not the “opposite,” just different. The picture never quite fitted; and then Macao changed, out of recognition, after 1967. In December 1966 and on a few occasions during the following weeks,



Macao hit the headlines of the world's press. But most people have only a vague recollection what happened and no idea at all what results these dramatic and curious events produced.

Macao lives under the shadows of its two neighbours—economically under Hong Kong; politically under China. The political upheaval of 1966-67 brought almost unbearable humiliation for Portugal. This dark and grim tragedy proved to be extremely beneficial for all concerned and the Communist rule of Macao (disguised as a right-wing, Salazarian-type, reactionary dictatorship) works admirably, apparently to everybody's satisfaction.

The place is also an iceberg. Perhaps not the aptest of metaphors for a place which I found almost as hellishly hot as Bangkok, but it is an iceberg in that both its real economic strength and its true political character are hidden, covered up, invisible.

Hong Kong is a huge metropolis, a vast expanse, a tremendous economic power compared with Macao. Hong Kong, with Kowloon and the New Territories, covers about 400 square miles, Macao six square miles altogether, but without Taipa and Coloane, the two not too important islands, peninsular Macao—i.e., Macao proper—is only 2.1 square miles—smaller than London's Hyde Park. Hong Kong has about 4 million inhabitants, Macao less than 300,000.<sup>1</sup>

The Portuguese came to Macao before Elizabeth I ascended the throne; the British occupied Hong Kong during the first decade of Victoria's reign. In other words, the Portuguese have been in Macao for more than 400 years, while the British, with their 126 years' residence in Hong Kong are sheer newcomers, *parvenus*.

Macao is affluent. Local official economists explain its prosperity in diverse ways but never mention its main source of income—which is part of the iceberg. Officials will speak about Macao's industries. True, Macao has flourishing fisheries and textile-works and is well known for some minor products: incense-sticks and fire-crackers being the most important among them.

<sup>1</sup> In 1960 there were only 170,000 people in Macao—less than 8,000 Portuguese among them. An official handbook explains that the increase in population was due to an "influx from neighbouring countries." As Macao has no neighbours, only one neighbour: China, this wording reflects an exceeding measure of delicacy and tact. (The name Macao derives from the Goddess A-Ma, patroness of seafarers. The Portuguese first called the Place A-Ma-Kao, the Bay of A-Ma. Hence Macao, or, in the local spelling, Macau.)

<sup>2</sup> The whole operation is described in detail by Richard Hughes in his *Hong Kong: Borrowed Place—Borrowed Time* (André Deutsch, 1968).

Tiny economic units tend to concentrate on curious products: what false teeth and sausage skins are to Lichtenstein, incense-sticks and fire-crackers are to Macao. Both joss-sticks and fire-crackers play an important part in certain Chinese ceremonies, and in any case, the Chinese have a mania for fire-crackers; a large amount of Macao's fire-crackers and joss-sticks are exported to the United States, a country with a large Chinese population. Lately, the competition from Taiwan has become fierce, but the fire-cracker industry is still flourishing.

Some Macao economists will speak of tourism which was practically dead for a long time after the 1966-67 troubles but slowly recovered and is flourishing again. Many "tourists" are simply Chinese from Hong Kong, who come to gamble in the casinos and at the dog-races—two institutions conspicuously missing from the amenities of Hong Kong. But there are many ordinary, foreign sight-seers, too. As one Macao official put it: "Hong Kong is bursting; Hong Kong is so rich that it is overflowing. We are bound to enjoy large benefits from Hong Kong's prosperity: tourists, commercial orders, industrial expansion."

The opium trade has been drastically reduced and checked under Chinese pressure but gold-smuggling (and this is the iceberg part of Macao's economy) is still flourishing. The headquarters of the world's largest gold-syndicates are located in a dirty little building in the Avenida Almeida Ribeiro.<sup>2</sup> It is said that more than fifty million dollars-worth of gold passes annually through the Shing Hing Bank. The export of gold from Hong Kong and the import of gold into Macao are quite legal. It is, of course, possible, that all the gold once imported, remains in the bank's cellars. But it is rumoured that most of this gold finds its way to strange hands, is melted down and transformed into doughnut-shaped oblongs and re-exported to Overseas Chinese who—as one bank-director put it—"like to have a small piece of gold." Few people speak of this gold-traffic and it is regarded as rather bad form to mention it. But as the Macao Government officially collects 42 per cent on all gold imports, it is easy to see that Macao makes more on gold than on fire-crackers.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to understand Macao without understanding its relationship with Hong Kong and China.

Hong Kong is one of the most beautiful and fascinating places in the world. It's a shopper's El Dorado, a gastronomical paradise, and the view is breathtaking. Yet Hong Kong is also a disappointing and exasperating place. The



rich are getting richer but the poor are miserable, overworked and downtrodden. Hong Kong regards itself as a Chinese city and, curiously enough, the rich merchants, industrialists, bankers, speculators and sharecroppers of Hong Kong are all inordinately proud of Mao, on a nationalist basis. They have a point, of course: it is due to Mao that China is not exploited, and carved up by the great powers as she used to be, but is respected and feared as a Great Power. But Hong Kong does not really want to know anything about power politics: politics in general is a dirty word. Hong Kong does not want "independence" because China might tolerate a British colony but certainly would not tolerate an independent Chinese state on her borders; the Chinese of Hong Kong do not wish to be involved in local party dealings either: entanglement means sticking one's neck out and who knows what tomorrow brings? So Hong Kong remains a cultural desert, engaged only and exclusively in money-making, with a greed and open rapaciousness that seemed to me to be unparalleled anywhere in the world. And that's why Hong Kong is not really a Chinese city: it is an *overseas* Chinese city. No sign of the gentleness, courtesy, spirituality and philosophical tolerance of many people on the Chinese mainland; it is the overseas Chinese whose main (if not only) interest is money-making, who are honest, efficient, decent but single-minded; and who are infinitely proud of the land they left never to return; of the land whose politics they loathe.

But Mao—at the moment—is no threatening monster, looming on the Hong Kong horizon. For me, during my two recent visits to Hong Kong, he created an altogether different impression. Hong Kong is full of his shops. And his shops are the best in the colony. Before entering a shop, I always watched out, and if I failed to see Mao's huge portraits on the walls and his thoughts displayed over all the walls—the signs that the shop was one of his—hesitated to enter. Goods were often better and always much cheaper than in other shops. And all enterprises were run on shameless—if somewhat outmoded—capitalist principles. Shoppers get discounts; gift-vouchers; shopping vouchers worth so many Hong Kong dollars. Every trick and device is used to keep a customer and make him come back. I have got fountain-pens, belts, fans and ties as gifts from Chairman Mao and I cherish them all. After the Red Guard Revolution and his subsequent near-destruction of the Chinese Communist Party, I have doubts about his political astuteness; but in my eyes he is a retail merchant of genius. I hope he will write a second little Red Book—

"Chairman Mao's Second Thoughts"—and will put in it all the advice he can give to fellow-shopkeepers. And I also hope that the new book will be made compulsory reading for all capitalist retailers who will have to chant a few pearls of wisdom before every meal, learn them by heart, and thus become worthier and more successful pillars of old-fashioned, *laissez-faire* capitalism.

THE BRIEF STORY of Macao's downfall is this.

Chou En-lai made a remark during the Red Guards hubbub that the revolution must be spread overseas. "Overseas," for the Red Guard, meant Hong Kong and Macao. They began with Macao.

They were greatly helped by the short-sightedness of the Macao government. It all grew out—as such grave matters often do—from a triviality. On 15 November 1966 an old building was being demolished in Macao, but as the demolition licence was not in order, the authorities ordered the workers to stop. This incensed the workers, they refused to obey and carried on with their job. Policemen were rushed in, they manhandled some of the workers and a fight ensued. As a result of this fracas—because it was no more at that stage—eight workers were arrested.

The high-handed police methods and the arrests made the workers really furious. They sent a deputation to the governor's residence, and demanded not only the immediate release of the arrested workers, but also compensation and an apology. They had to deal with the Deputy Governor, because the Governor himself, Brigadier Nobre de Carvalho, was actually on his way back to Macao from Portugal. The Deputy Governor, naturally enough, played for time; he wanted to place this baby in the Governor's lap. He succeeded with his delaying tactics but the time thus gained also gave ample time to the Communists across the border to seize this heaven-sent opportunity and work out their strategy.

On 25 November Governor Carvalho arrived, pooh-poohed the whole affair and—as military gentlemen are wont to do—decided that the smack of a firm hand was needed. Workers—by this time joined by young schoolboys (Macao has no university, only secondary schools)—sent a deputation every day to see the Governor; they were received, day after day, by the Governor's A.D.C. and turned away. On 4 December a huge crowd gathered, consisting of workers and students—the latter mostly boys or girls of 14 or 15 but some not older than

eight—and demanded, rather vociferously, to see the Governor. Their request was once again refused, whereupon they invaded the Governor's Palace. The Governor asked for police reinforcements.

From that moment things turned from bad to worse. One step inevitably produced the next—only too familiar to those who have followed the course of other riots and revolutions. The police handled the demonstrators roughly but there was no shooting; they used batons "only." Their job did not prove easy, fighting broke out in the Hall of the Governor's Palace and by the time the Palace got cleared, excitement reached a new pitch.

Street demonstrations followed, the workers and students chanting slogans and refusing to disperse. The authorities called in the police and the firemen, and water-hoses almost did their job. But not quite, so a few tear-gas bombs had to be used, too.

All this led to new outbreaks. The crowd entered Government Department (the building where the administrative offices are housed), smashed furniture and destroyed documents. Those who could not get in refused to remain idle and set about to demolish the statue of Jorge Alvares, the first Portuguese who set foot in Macao. They failed to pull the statue down—but did manage to break one arm. By this time the taxi-drivers joined the rioters and taxi-drivers are important people in Macao. They are renowned trouble-makers and—more important—members of a strong and politically minded union. At 4 p.m. the rioters broke into the inner government offices, smashed more furniture and burnt more documents. At 6.30 the Governor ordered a curfew to last till 7 in the morning. The curfew produced the first victims. Three Chinese broke it and were shot dead by the police.

Next morning the crowd went mad with anger. This resulted in further outbreaks and the outbreaks, in turn, in more shooting. Five more people were killed, mostly youngsters under 20. But the situation might have been saved for the Macao government even at this late hour. The curfew lasted for a week and by the time it was lifted, tempers had calmed down to some extent. A 13-strong Negotiating Committee was formed and demanded to see the Governor. The Governor first refused, then hesitated.

While he hesitated, Mao's men from across the border muscled in. The Chinese government regarded the matter as too trivial to step in, so it was the Foreign Affairs Committee of Kwantung Province who sent strongly and threateningly worded warnings and demands to the Governor. The Governor was a realist and

(this part of the story is based on hearsay only, but confirmed by all who are supposed to know) suggested to the Portuguese government to evacuate Macao and give it up. Before Mao could panic—this being the last thing the Chinese wanted—the Governor had received instructions from Lisbon to capitulate. This capitulation was humbling and humiliating. On 29 January 1967, the Governor had to send a delegation to the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and sign an agreement with the Committee of Thirteen whom he had refused to receive some time before. The Government of Macao had to admit that they had been wrong; that it was all their fault; and they agreed to pay a compensation of more than 2,000,000 patacas (about £140,000) to the victims. But even this was not all. The delegation, having signed this humiliating document, had to cross the Chinese border, meet the emissaries of the Kwantung Foreign Affairs Committee and sign an even more humiliating one, agreeing to ban all anti-Communist activities in Macao, disband all pro-Chiang Kai-shek organisations and stop the influx of refugees from China. As a result, a large number of Kuomintang agents and supporters had to leave Macao, among them one of the leading merchants. Chiang was silenced and the Taiwan News Agency expelled.

THE PORTUGUESE THOUGHT that this was the end, that such a humiliation could not be borne. In a sense, of course, this *was* the end: the end of Macao as a Province, ruled from Portugal. It is now ruled from Canton—or Peking—and what the Communists say goes. But the Communists do not, as yet, say too much and the situation—surprisingly and paradoxically—has improved for all concerned. Mao, obviously, could not tolerate old-fashioned, pre-Sun Yat-sen types of massacres (Sun, by the way, lived in Macao for a while) and the Governor was extremely foolish to believe that these Portuguese police-methods would work on the Chinese border. But the air has been cleared, and the situation much improved.

After the capitulation, of course, all tourist traffic was stopped; people were too much afraid to come. This clearly did not suit Mao—who gets more than half of his foreign currencies from Hong Kong and Macao. So the former wild slogan about "*Portuguese Imperialists Go Home!*" "*Down with the British!*" etc., etc., were washed off the walls and replaced by notices welcoming the visitor. Mao opened more of his shops and does a roaring business. Refugees from China are not allowed in, Chiang has been turned out and a great deal of the opium-racket stopped, but otherwise the Portuguese carry on, seemingly

as before. China has no objection at all to a dictatorial, right-wing government; she would have all the objections against a democratic régime which might suggest to Macao's neighbour that liberal democracy works. The tourists have returned, they come in larger numbers than ever before, the Casinos are brightly lit up every night, the dog races are more popular than ever. Macao may still be a volcano; but surely, it appears to be the happiest and most relaxed volcano in the world. (The Red Guards tried their tricks in Hong Kong, six months later, but the British fared better than their neighbours. *Their* police behaved with admirable restraint and good humour; their government stood firm. Perhaps Mao, too, was slightly terrified that he might lose his most valuable colony, Hong Kong, and has let the matter slide?)

So now we have a peculiar political situation in that Far Eastern corner. The great capitalists of Hong Kong (as I have pointed out earlier) are proud of Chairman Mao, on purely nationalist grounds. Mao is a nationalist hero and he also keeps a jealous and protective eye on his two favourite colonies, Hong Kong and

Macao, and runs his prosperous retail-shops on slightly outmoded, liberal-capitalist lines. The Communists rule Macao—a Portuguese territory—where the Communist Party is still banned and indeed (believe it or not) Communist China is not recognised. They rule—but don't exist.

How long will this last? I am no prophet: I don't know. The arrangement is reasonable, but to expect Chairman Mao to go on doing what is reasonable is itself the height of folly. Richard Hughes tells us of a very rich Macao merchant, Fu Tak-yam, who in 1946 was kidnapped by bandits while smoking opium in a Buddhist retreat. His family had to pay a ransom of £62,500. Eight years later one of his sons was kidnapped and the same ransom demanded. Fu refused to pay. "Why should I pay out all that money? I have enough sons, anyway," he said, viewing the situation from a sensible and practical point of view. Mao, it seems, has learnt from Fu. He seems to be saying, for the time being at any rate: "Why should I stop doing business? Why should I incorporate the two colonies? I have enough sons anyway."

### A Curse from the Twelfth Century

May he that lured me into love  
Yet shuns my lonely bed  
Be turned into a demon  
With three horns on his head.

May all men shun his company,  
And may his shifty soul  
Find in some grey bog-creeping bird  
Its fit and flitting hole.

May the cold wedge of winter  
Jam every crevice shut,  
May wind and snow and iciness  
Flick him from rut to rut.

May both his feet freeze off him,  
And may his flesh corrode  
Into a scrawniness of grass  
At the dirt-edge of the road.

And may his way of walking  
Be shiveringly bare  
With the trembling of all rabbits,  
The hurt limp of the hare.

*Anonymous*  
translated by Graeme Wilson

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## LETTERS

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### Noam Chomsky Replies

THE ISSUE OF AUGUST 1969 contains a discussion of my book *American Power and the New Mandarins* by R in which there are a number of false statements. He formulates the "essence" of my position as this: "American foreign policy is wholly evil, and necessarily so, because it is the direct reflection of a society which is also absolutely evil." No reference or citation is given to support this characterisation of my views. The reason is simple. It is entirely the invention of the commentator. I have never even hinted at, let alone expressed such an absurdity. On the contrary, I have repeatedly insisted that: "In the Western world at least, [intellectuals] have the power that comes from political liberty, from access to information and freedom of expression," that Western democracy provides them "the leisure, the facilities, and the training to seek the truth lying hidden behind the veil of distortion and misrepresentation, ideology, and class interest through which the events of current history are presented to us." My criticism is directed against those who fail to use or who directly abuse the political liberty and privilege afforded them in the Western democracies. And in fact, I repeatedly refer with praise to journalists, congressmen, scholars, resisters, and many others who have made use of the "high degree of internal freedom" that we enjoy. That R should read this as an indictment of American society as "absolutely evil" tells us something about his political attitudes, but nothing about mine.

R further attributes to me, without reference, the view that the United States is so evil that if it "was capable of having a conscience it would refuse to have a foreign policy at all." Once again, what I actually state is quite different. I urge that "American power and resources and technical skills must be used to build and not to repress or to 'contain' or to destroy," and I suggest that instead of delivering lectures on "the really substantial democratic values that have been in part realised in Western society," American intellectuals "should face a task that is infinitely more significant and challenging—the task of creating, in the United States, the intellectual and moral climate, as well as the social and economic conditions, that would permit this country to participate in modernisation and development in a way commensurate with its material wealth and technical capacity."

R states further that "when Professor Chomsky talks about Viet Nam or the Korean War we have left the sphere of rational discourse." I have never written about the Korean War. My few passing references to it are quite uncontroversial. I have written at length about the Viet Nam War, which I regard as a monstrous atrocity, and I am quite prepared to let the reader judge for himself the accuracy of R's appraisal, which is, once again, given with no factual support.

R claims that my use of sources "at times...

seems to verge on falsification," and cites one example to support this allegation, namely, a case where, he claims, I invented a quotation. The facts are as follows. In my book I quoted several comments by D. F. Fleming and James Warburg on a speech of Truman's, and I mistakenly attributed their paraphrases to Truman himself (to compound the error I gave one quote as "all freedom is dependent on freedom of enterprise" whereas in fact the text has "freedom of worship and speech" in place of "all freedom"). Since I gave a precise page reference to the source from which the quotes were taken, the error was quickly discovered by a reviewer, and in the second printing (and the British edition) the quotes are corrected and correctly attributed. No further change was necessary, since the commentary of Fleming and Warburg was accurate and perceptive, contrary to what R implies, as the reader can determine by checking the original documents. This was a careless and inexcusable error, which I am happy to have corrected. It is not, however, a case of "invention" or "falsification." If there are other errors in the use of sources, they have not come to my attention.

These are the only alleged facts that R cites. The remainder of his remarks are mere diatribe.

NOAM CHOMSKY

Massachusetts Institute  
of Technology,  
Cambridge, Mass.

[There is a reply by R to Professor Chomsky's letter in *Column* on p. 47 of this number.—ED.]

### Nietzsche & Insanity

MR. MACINTYRE has now changed his thesis [ENCOUNTER, Sept.]. In his article he had suggested that in "trying to create a new moral world" Nietzsche "perhaps destroyed his own power of reason." Now he claims that his concern was merely with "the particular intellectual content of incipient insanity in Nietzsche," which is an altogether different issue. But "Philosophy & Sanity" [ENCOUNTER, April] threw as little light on this question as it did on the causes of Nietzsche's madness. Indeed, the article ignored almost all of the documents that reflect Nietzsche's incipient madness.

Mr. MacIntyre's interpretation of Nietzsche's *Übermensch* is not as close to mine as he says. I would not dream of denying the vulgarity of the "culture-hero, the superman" whom he describes as "a particularly loud-mouthed and effective moral subjectivist." I had thought the subject was Nietzsche, but in his letter MacIntyre seems concerned to establish his own superiority "as a practitioner of invective" and an expert on "vulgarity." I cheerfully concede to him far greater merits than these. But unfortunately they do not redeem his caprice on "Philosophy & Sanity."

C. W. M. Whitty's observations about Nietzsche's madness are very close to those I presented along with some further evidence in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* and in my *Nietzsche*. This is hardly the place for me to recapitulate further details or

to discuss the relationship of a philosopher's life and pathology to his thought. But one comparison may help a little. We should not try to discredit Van Gogh's late paintings by pointing out that he was not altogether sane when he created them; neither should we say that his madness was the outcome of painting Van Gogh's pictures. The differences between the two men are legion, and Nietzsche was by no means indubitably mentally ill when writing his late works. While his philosophy must in any case be evaluated on its merits, it adds poignancy to know under what strains both men laboured and how desperately they clung to their creative work as long as they humanly could.

In the end Van Gogh shot himself; Nietzsche, of whom Freud was to say that "he had a more penetrating knowledge of himself than any other man who ever lived or was ever likely to live," failed to recognise the last moment and, despite his celebration of "death freely chosen, death at the right time," published during the same month, collapsed helplessly and more or less vegetated for another eleven-and-a-half years.

Nietzsche is far more interesting as a human being than are most great philosophers. But the problem of the place of reason in life and in philosophy is not only posed by his life but also explicitly raised in his philosophy. It richly deserves attention—more serious attention than it received in Mr. MacIntyre's article or could get in a short letter.

WALTER KAUFMANN

Princeton University

## Astor, Sykes, Wheeler-Bennett

MR. ASTOR [ENCOUNTER, October] catches me nodding when I say that "no British official documents directly concerning . . . Trott have yet been published." It is quite true that the memorandum by Sir John Wheeler-Bennett, written in collaboration with Trott in 1940, has been published. It appeared in one of the quarterlies issued by the *Institut für Zeitgeschichte*. I forgot this. I am guilty of a mistake.

Unfortunately, not satisfied with pointing out the mistake, Mr. Astor proceeds to confuse the issue in his own inimitable fashion. "Mr. Sykes," he says, "was furnished with the [memorandum]. But, like Sir John, he evidently did not want to consider even the small degree of British responsibility . . ." for the failure of anti-Nazism in Germany. These two sentences unmistakably suggest, I think, that in spite of having the memorandum to hand, I preferred not to mention it in my book. In fact, if Mr. Astor will turn to page 318 of my book *Troubled Loyalty* he will find a brief record of the memorandum's composition with quotations from the most significant items in it.

Perhaps, however, Mr. Astor has deduced that I "did not want to consider . . . British responsibility" because I did not follow my account with a tirade. If so, I must tell him that to let the facts speak for themselves, leaving the reader to draw his own conclusions, is the method I try to follow in writing.

CHRISTOPHER SYKES

Wiltshire

## Hobbits and Intellectuals

### *A Reply to Donald Davie — By KINGSLEY AMIS*

I AM NOT SURE I got the total hang of Donald Davie's "Hobbits and Intellectuals" piece [ENCOUNTER, October]. To begin near its beginning: I cannot really see why a polemicist (like me) should not be taken seriously unless he gets too angry to want to go on living in his own country. This would hardly do as a general rule. Neither can I see how Davie can consider himself no less good a patriot than myself (or R), "perhaps a better," when he says he doesn't like it here and takes off. He is not in Kuznetsov's situation.

But these are small puzzles, and I think I understand his later, major metaphor about Creon, the person willingly in authority, *versus* Antigone, the person in perpetual opposition who is too spiritually grand ever to accept power and its corrupting temptations and whom he equates with my figure of the Lefty. I even agree with some of this, and am glad to find that Davie doesn't seem to like Lefties any more than I do. However, there are a couple of points, closely related, that I should like to take up first.

Davie is being a little perverse when he says what a good thing, in international politics, a "loss of nerve" can be. Such a failure would not have helped

us, or the world, much in 1805 or 1940. (I am prepared to argue about 1914.) Anyway, what Davie had to say on this topic has been overtaken by events, and as I write—just after Moratorium Day—we can view a loss of nerve on a scale and at a depth and with a chain of possible consequences spectacular enough to satisfy even him, I hope.

He also says he differs from me about "the alleged monolith of Communism." The notion that Communism is not monolithic and that this somehow makes a difference is actually a favourite crypto-neo-post Lefty one. Various simple answers to it suggest themselves. One is that Fascism, as practised in Germany, Italy and Japan was a good deal less monolithic than Communism has ever been and still managed to be both very unpleasant and very dangerous. Another is that it doesn't much matter to me whether a Communist gets at me with the bastinado or the knout, a missile or a machete—all that really divides them is how to bury us, as (or roughly as) John Kennedy put it. Perhaps Davie would deny that Communism is always and everywhere tyrannical and, whenever it thinks it can get away with it, aggressive as well: Korea, Malaya, Viet Nam, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, etc. It will

## Life & Letters Today

London

SHOPPING WIVES were too shy to ask for one of the new sliced loaves. They could not bring themselves to say the name emblazoned on the packets—BUMS.

A few did buy the bread by simply pointing at it. But most settled for another brand. And sales of the loaves at NAAFI shops in Germany were a flop.

The NAAFI people realised the trouble—and decided that a tactful explanation was required. In a programme over the British Forces Broadcasting Service, they informed Servicemen's wives that the name of the Dutch-made loaves was pronounced "Booms." That did the trick. After nearly a year of being shunned, Bums bread is suddenly on the boom.

A NAAFI spokesman said yesterday: "Sales of the bread before the broadcast were not the success that had been hoped for. But since the correct pronunciation was explained, the bread has proved to be a sell-out. It's an excellent white sliced loaf."

The spokesman added: "We knew about its unfortunate name before ordering it. But it was decided that we must have the best bread available to Forces families in Germany—regardless of what it was called."

DAILY MIRROR

London

ERIC PARTRIDGE arrives at the British Museum Reading Room every morning (Saturdays included) at 9.30 for his day's work.

Partridge, who is 75 this week, is the world authority on slang. He made the position for himself when he wrote a history of slang in 1933, following it up with a dictionary of slang in 1937.

Since then he has written about and collected clichés, Forces' slang, underworld slang, Shakespearean bawdy. . . .

Sometimes solving the mystery of a word is just hard slog. Like "phoney."

"Phoney" means a lot of things, from "pretended" to "spurious" to "disguised." Most people first used it in Britain in 1939. Remember the "phoney" war? But if you track it back you can find it in American writings as early as the 1870s applied to jewellery, particularly costume jewellery, sold by peddlars. At this point a red herring emerges, a jeweller's shop that existed in New York around this time called Forney.

For many etymologists that was enough. But Partridge dug deeper. Eventually he came on "fawney," a name used in the American underworld as early as 1850 for a finger ring.

But "fawney" goes back in England to the 18th century. The "fawney rig" was the name for the ring-dropping trick, much beloved of the sharper members of the underworld. One of them would drop a ring in the street, then turn and insist it was yours. You would say it wasn't, but he would insist it was. Eventually after a lot of argument, he would agree to give up his claim to it for a small consideration, say five bob. You gave him five bob, then discovered the ring was worthless. But why "fawney"?

Much later he remembered his social history.

In the eighteenth century there had been a large influx of Irish into England after the potato famine. Among them were many crooks who would have been adept at the fawney rig. Was this the clue? He looked up an Erse dictionary. There it was: "FAINNE" (pronounced fawney) meaning a finger-ring.

DAILY MAIL

I HAVE RECENTLY [Kenneth Allsop writes] been the subject of some newspaper publicity, particularly in Scotland, and in almost every instance and every publication have been described as "the television personality."

This label seems to me vapid and valueless. My passport designation is "journalist," based, not unrealistically I think, upon 25 years as reporter, feature-writer or critic in the press and upon 15 years of visual journalism on television current affairs programmes. This causes me to wonder why "personality" has become attached to television and not to other activities.

Could it not, with equal relevance or irrelevance, be used in, say, "House of Commons personality" (M.P.), or "pulpit personality" (the Archbishop of Canterbury), "Divorce Court personality" (judge), or even "person personality" (psychiatrist). There remains, too, the wide open opportunity of calling Chi Chi "the Zoo animality."

THE TIMES

London

A NEW BOOK edited by Tariq Ali has a frontispiece with a diagram which gives a simple, concise method of making a "Molotov cocktail"—a petrol bomb.

Tariq Ali said last night: "I am not sure about the diagram as a frontispiece. I would have preferred it as the book's cover. As a diagram of a Molotov cocktail it at least gives the right ingredients and would prevent the maker having his hands blown off."

Mr. Peter Owen, the book's London publisher, said the frontispiece bomb was a simple device. "You could find it in any kiddies' chemistry book. What child is going to pay 38s. to find out how to make it?"

A decision on publishing the bomb-kit diagram was being left to individual publishers abroad. "We felt that the student situation was less explosive in Britain than in other countries so there would be no harm in publishing it here."

DAILY MAIL

Paris

THE French Academy, on its guard against the corruption of the French language by Anglo-Saxonisms, has just handed down the following ruling: "management" is okay provided it is pronounced in the French manner and mass-media is okay as "masse-media."

EVENING STANDARD

Birmingham

THE BIGGEST aluminium rolling mill in Europe was closed last night after 300 maintenance workers walked out. They claim that a superintendent used a four-letter word to a shop steward and are demanding that he should be sacked. After the walk-out, at the James Booth plant in Birmingham, another 1,000 men were sent home.

DAILY MAIL

have to get a bloody sight more polyolithic than it is before I start treating different bits of it differently enough to make a difference.

Now to Creon and Antigone. "If Communism is not monolithic, neither is 'protest,'" says Davie. Well, protest isn't monolithic, no, whatever Leftists may pretend, and here is a serious weakness in the Antigone idea—it doesn't apply in enough cases. There is no evidence that the Russian protesters would refuse office of authority in a civilised Russia, as proper Antigones would; they might, and then again they might not. There is no evidence, to say the least, that none of our student rioters and their faculty accomplices are interested in power, and their heroes—Guevara, Castro, Ho, Mao—are Creon-men to a man. (Marcuse, largely unread, of course, is just a chap in an Establishment post who, so to speak, proves the rule, a Dean of Canterbury figure, or perhaps more closely analogous, in a different sphere, to Shakespeare or Michelangelo as they used to feature, when the hand of repression was heavier, in those self-justifying lists of great queers of history that ordinary queers used to carry about.)

Just as the trouble with Creon in all sorts of his incarnations—university administrator, educationist, Arts Council committee member, and whoever chose the new editor of the *Radio Times*—is that he has become worm-eaten with Antigonism, so the genuine Antigones, of whom there are probably a few left, have become infiltrated with little Creons. The latter will never actually attain the power they seek; if they ever get near it they will be gobbled up by the big Creons who know their business, just as in 1917. Those are the people who frighten me. And I don't care whether they turn out to be Stalinist or Brezhnevite or Maoist or Hoxha-ite or Castro-ite or Hitlerite (or Hitlerite) or whatever. As I said, it doesn't make enough difference.

KINGSLEY AMIS

Lemmons  
Hadley Common  
Barnet, Herts.

## Translating Wittgenstein

PROFESSOR STEPHEN TOULMIN's central point is the continuity between *Tractatus* (prised free from Russellian positivism) and the usual reading of the *Investigations*. A necessary part of the latter is Wittgenstein's case against private ostensive definition and hence against the logical possibility of private languages. Now in the *Investigations* Wittgenstein repeatedly uses "*hinweisende Erklärung*" to mean "ostensive definition," and Anscombe and other translators so give it (cf. *PI*, I, paras. 6, 28, 29, 30 and *passim*). Hence if the usual translation of "*hinweisende Erklärung*" is rejected by Professor Toulmin, the usual reading of the *Investigations* falls to the ground, and with it the continuity of that reading with *Tractatus* or anything else.

Fortunately the German is quite clear: "*hinweisende*," which means "pointing at," is an active participle describing "*Erklärung*," which means

"explanation or definition." If Professor Toulmin and Dr. Onubogu want a German form for "explanation (or definition) suggested by" some other thing such as "logical analysis," they must replace "*hinweisende*" by a past participle passive such as "*(dadurch) hingewiesene*," though this is a rather clumsy and doubtful form. What seems quite clear is that the original Toulmin-Onubogu translation does such violence to the German syntax and grammar that it cannot be accepted. Since the usual translation is essential for Professor Toulmin's general thesis, this is just as well.

MICHAEL LIPTON

University of Sussex

STEPHEN TOULMIN'S REFUSAL, in your May issue, to "accept" Michael Lipton's translation of *hinweisende Erklärung*, makes one wonder what Carlyle would have said if Mrs. Fuller had declared that she did not accept the universe. Moreover, it seems strange that Toulmin is not aware that Lipton's correct translation of the passage draws attention to two even more fundamental mistakes, one of grammar (*Analyse* and *Erklärung* are both feminine and therefore the *es* cannot refer to them) and one of idiom (*Unklar war mir...* means "I failed to see..."), in Toulmin's own translation.

These mistakes completely falsify Toulmin's original claim [ENCOUNTER, Jan. 1969, p. 62] that from this passage "we can now demonstrate how... Wittgenstein could see his books as successive attacks... on one and the same group of problems." Correctly translated the passage demonstrates the opposite.

PETER MUNZ

University of Wellington,  
New Zealand

ALL SARCASM APART, Peter Munz's letter gives rise to one interesting and debatable question: not (to be sure) the philological one, about the correct translation of *hinweisende Erklärung*, but the philosophical one, about the relevance of this translation to my account of Wittgenstein's intellectual development. The correctness of Michael Lipton's translation "ostensive definition" (Peter Munz argues) falsifies my interpretation. But is this so? In fact (I shall reply) it puts me in a position to deepen my account by adding one further significant detail.

To clear the philological point out of the way: the testimony I have had about this from native German-speaking informants is conflicting. Still, if Peter Munz insists that *hinweisende Erklärung* just was the idiomatic equivalent of "ostensive definition" in the 1920s, then—given his qualifications—it would be silly of me to ignore that insistence. In any case, it should not be hard to put the matter beyond doubt: a quotation or two from early Carnap, or from German translations of early Russell, could clinch it.

However, if we suppose that Lipton and Munz are right on this point, what will follow about the interpretation of Wittgenstein's development? Only this, I believe: that the original cross-purposes between Russell and Wittgenstein over "atomic facts",

*Protokolsätze*, etc.—with Russell reading into Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* the epistemological doctrines of his own book, *Our Knowledge of the External World*, and Wittgenstein rejecting Russell's interpretation as a complete misunderstanding—extended also to the notion of "ostensive definition." Even today, we are so accustomed to looking at the notion from an epistemological point of view that we may forget that, like all "definition," it is at home first and foremost in the theory of language, rather than the theory of knowledge. (This very habit may have made me needlessly resistant to Michael Lipton's alternative translation.) It was possible, therefore, to accept the notion when explaining the *Verbindung der Sprache und der Wirklichkeit*—assuming that the ultimate terms and propositions of a logically perspicuous language acquire their meanings "ostensively"—without going on to use it also as the starting point for an entire epistemology.

This (I believe) is what Wittgenstein did, and I ought to have seen this point more clearly earlier since, so far from falsifying my interpretation, it strengthens it. In both phases of his philosophy (I should still argue) Wittgenstein was concerned with the same fundamental questions about the scope, limits, and meaning of language, as an instrument of expression, representation, and reason. In neither phase was he preoccupied with epistemological issues, and his change of direction in the late 1920s took place entirely within his account of the ways in which words and utterances are given a meaning within language.

STEPHEN TOULMIN

*Alfriston Pilegate,  
Sussex*

## The Tucholsky Complaint

I GREATLY ENJOYED Walter Laqueur's brilliant analysis of "The Tucholsky Complaint" [ENCOUNTER, October 1969], but I must point out that the description of the Germans as a nation of *Richter und Henker* instead of *Dichter und Denker* does not come from Tucholsky, but from Karl Kraus. This mix up is very awkward, as Kraus even refused to meet Tucholsky, rejected all his advances and protested against his (Kraus') works being in any way coupled with those of Tucholsky, whom he called the author of poems in favour of the German war effort during the first World War (*Verfasser von Werbegedichten fuer eine Kriegsanleihe*) and "feuilletonistischen Mitarbeiter der buergerlichen Presse" (*Die Fackel*, No. 857-863, p. 64-1931). A year later (*Die Fackel*, No. 868-872, p. 81) he castigated him for denigrating (*Verulhung*) Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht.

London

J. W. BRUEGEL

THE MIX-UP is not mine. Tucholsky did make use of the "*Richter und Henker*" phrase. But I am not a Krausologist and I have no reason to doubt Dr. Bruegel's explanation, namely that Kraus invented it.

London

WALTER LAQUEUR

## AUTHORS

**John Mander** is a contributing editor of ENCOUNTER. His recent books include: *Berlin, Hostage for the West* (Penguin Special, 1962), *Great Britain or Little England?* (Secker & Warburg, 1963), and *Static Society: The Paradox of Latin America* (Gollancz, 1969; published in the U.S. by Knopf as *The Unrevolutionary Society*). He is currently engaged on a historical study of Anglo-German relations. His recent articles in ENCOUNTER include "Letter from Prague" (August 1968) and "Beirut, Damascus, Tel Aviv" (February 1968). . . .

**Seymour Martin Lipset** is Professor of Government and Social Relations at Harvard University's Center for International Affairs. His most recent book is *Revolution and Counterrevolution* (Heinemann, 63s.). . . .

**Dennis Silk** writes that his contribution in this number "is part of a book about Jerusalem written with the help of a grant from the Howard Foundation of Brown University. I should like to dedicate my piece to Arich Sachs and Harold Schimmel, the two Ss or the one S, and to Ana Marcovici Cleja."

THE BOOK by **Noam Chomsky**, *American Power and the New Mandarins*, which is referred to in this number's "Column" and "Letters," has just been published in Britain by Chatto & Windus (42s) and Penguin (8s). *The Neophiliacs* by **Christopher Booker** is published by Collins at 50s.

ERRATUM: Due to an unfortunate printers' error in our November issue two lines were scrambled in **Anthony Storr's** article "Misunderstanding Psycho-analysis" on page 89. Lines 30-36 should have read: "Harlow's work with Rhesus monkeys suggests that even so profound a mental disorder as schizophrenia *may* be dependent upon disturbance in the mother-child relation, whereas quite a number of analysts (including Jung) have thought it likely that some chemical cause for schizophrenia would be discovered."

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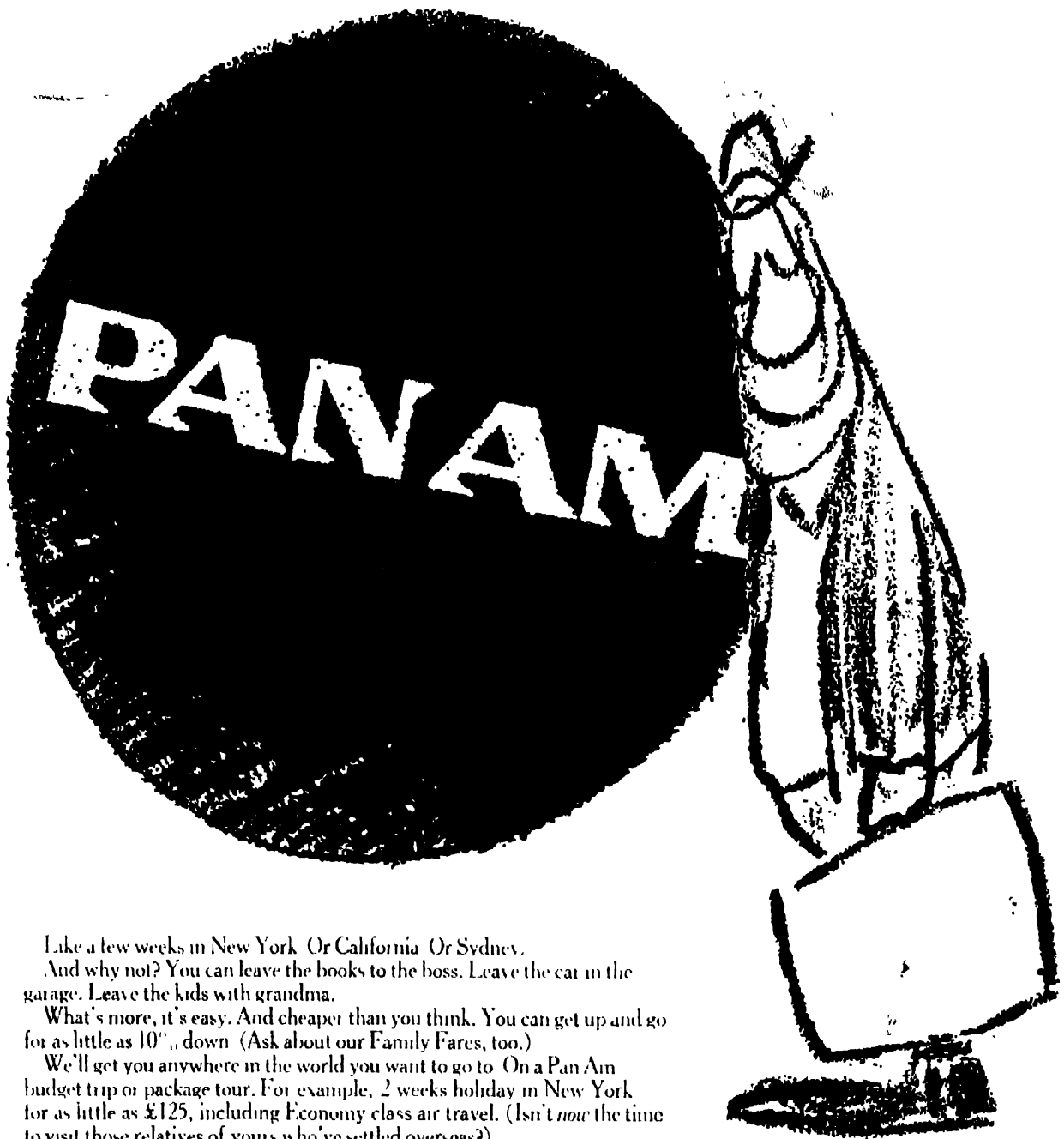
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